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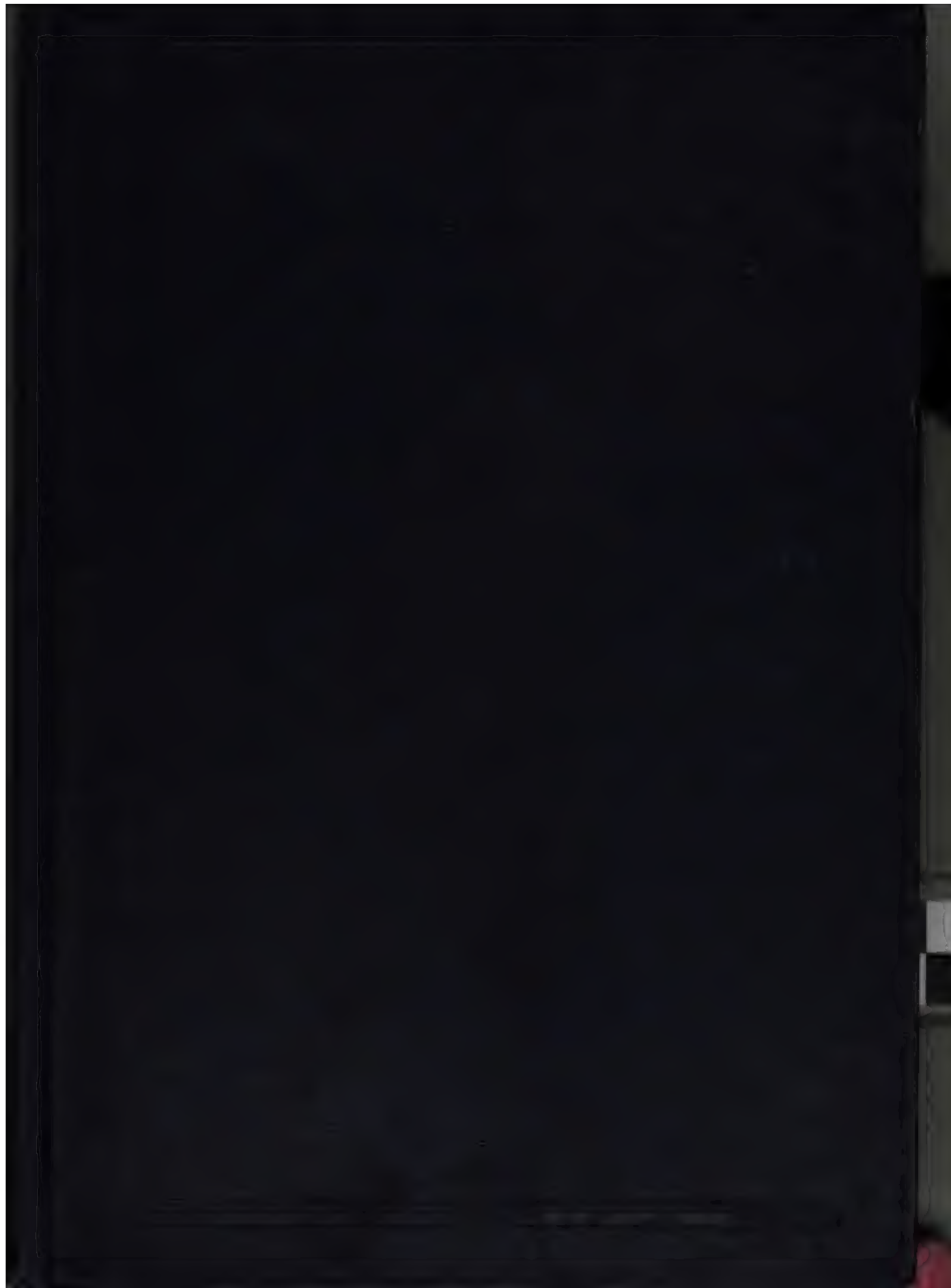
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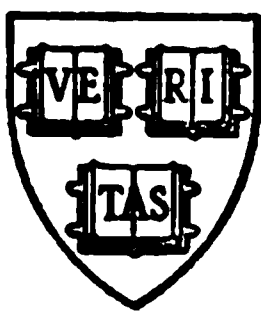
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A STUDY
OF
CHRISTIANITY AS ORGANIZED

ITS IDEAS AND FORMS

BY
JOHN A. KERN
PROFESSOR OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY

We think ourselves obliged frequently to view and review the whole order of our Church, always aiming at perfection, standing on the shoulders of those who have lived before us, and taking advantage of our former selves. —Coke and Asbury, Episcopal Address (1792).

*'Tis the work of a life till our lump be leaven—
The better; what's come to perfection perishes.*
—Browning, "Old Pictures in Florence."

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TO
MY COMRADES IN CONFERENCE
IN MEMORY OF FORTY-FOUR NOT UNEVENTFUL YEARS
IN THE SERVICE OF OUR MASTER
UNDER AN ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY
HAPPILY ADAPTED TO THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH IT AROSE
SINGULARLY SUCCESSFUL HITHERTO
PROMISEFUL FOR THE FUTURE
LIABLE OF NECESSITY TO ABUSE COMMENSURATE WITH
ITS GREAT AGGRESSIVE FORCE

(iii)

The stateliness of houses, the goodliness of trees, when we behold them, delighteth the eye; but the foundation which beareth up the one, the root which ministereth unto the other, is in the bosom of the earth concealed; and if there be occasion at any time to search into it, such labor is then more necessary than pleasant, both to them that undertake it and for the lookers-on. In like manner, the use and benefit of good Laws all that live under them may enjoy with delight and comfort, albeit the grounds and first original causes from whence they have sprung be unknown, as to the greatest part of men they are.—*Richard Hooker*.

Ideas make the world we live in.—*Helen Keller*.

(iv)

PREFACE.

CHRISTIANITY, as it becomes a common faith and experience, will draw people together into congregations, or churches. Moreover, it will develop in these churches various offices of oversight and ministration. Thus it organizes itself for doing the work of Christ in the world.

Church organization, therefore, so far as it bears the name worthily, is not something apart from Christian faith and experience. On the contrary, it is an outer form of the inner spiritual life. Most truly speaking, it is *Christianity* as organized.

In a study of Christianity, however, organization would not be generally chosen as its most attractive aspect. It has too much the appearance of legal mechanism. Also, it has provoked a great deal of discreditable controversy—in this respect standing by no means alone—and may seem to tend practically to division rather than unity in the Christian world.

No wonder, then, that certain sincere minds should be disposed to pass by such a theme with a very moderate amount of attention. Yet in point of fact it is full-laden with interest and significance. If the reader find it otherwise, the fault will be the writer's—or possibly his own.

Not, indeed, that the structural forms of even so transcendent a truth as Christianity must need be interesting for their own sake and in themselves. They are nothing in themselves; but as an expression of the movements of a great and abundant life within, they do possess the power of exciting perpetual interest. This, to be sure, is true of everything: the inner is the real. The letters are not the word: the thing seen is not the reality. Out of the horror of burning a live human body to a hideous cinder there may go forth a universal inspiration to that which is true and good; but all because of the truth of self-sacrifice which the murdered martyr embodies. What measure of interest would be awakened by a human face but for the invisible soul that appears in it? The “expression”—the unseen self visual-

ized—is what we value. And the forms of organization which the religion of Christ has taken, whether recent or historic, are no exception to the rule that the life is more than any outward structure that it builds. Back of them all may be felt the heart-beat of human ideas, energies, passions, conscience, aspirations. Their history, therefore, is easily susceptible of illustration, from beginning to end, with personal characteristics and incidents. Above all, there appears, by its proper tokens, though without violence to even the most perverse wills of men, the sovereign purpose of God in his Church's life on earth.

It is, then, the humanity back of every ecclesiastical question, with the Divine hand in the human struggle, that makes the story great.

Now the organization of a local church, in this or that instance, may indeed appear quite truly as little more than mechanism. But so likewise may the utterance of prayers, the singing of hymns, the delivery of sermons, the offering of money, the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, in the Christian congregation. Yet no one would declare this to be the proper character or design of these devotional observances. On the contrary, it is a sign of degeneration—they are losing their life. And the case is just the same with the forms of organization under which, together with certain forms of worship, a church of Jesus Christ would live its life and do its work in the world. They are simply untrue to their idea, unless alive.

The present treatise is designedly expository. Its aim is to relate the facts as known, or supposed to be, with as near an approach as possible to truth in explanation and criticism. I have hoped to set down a good deal in the way of fact and truth, with something of inference and something of suggestion.

Argument, indeed, cannot be wholly avoided; and what may seem to be a polemic trend will here and there intrude. But whatever bias of judgment as to any particular organization may betray itself would plead to be charitably condemned as an unconscious intellectual vice. Of course it may be none the less real on that account; for "who can understand his errors" or

claim to be free from "secret faults?" It is so easy for feeling and will to distort fact, minifying or magnifying, confusing segment and circle. Nevertheless one must recognize the obligation, and may be permitted to profess the intention, at least, of speaking the whole unperverted truth in love. And as to controversy, it is worse than vanity (in both senses of this word) unless it be purely for truth's sake and love's sake.

The topical method of treatment has been chosen in preference to the chronological. In following this method I am aware of having incurred the danger of undue repetition. But this, I hope, has been guarded against, and the various topics permitted only to reappear without intruding. To touch the same fact or idea in different connections at different times is indeed one of the best ways to make its acquaintance.

From the introduction of the footnotes that cumber so many pages I would willingly have been excused. More than once have I felt inclined to throw aside all these digressions—"for what is a footnote but a digression?" But the nature of the discussion pleaded for them with much show of reason; and so they remain. Let them serve, more or less satisfactorily, as authority for views presented in the text, as confirmatory (or contradictory) views, and as some indication of the literature of the subject.

I am glad of this opportunity to acknowledge indebtedness to several honored scholars and church leaders for consenting to criticise my manuscript with reference to the history or the present organization of the churches which they respectively represent—to Dean E. I. Bosworth, of Oberlin Theological Seminary; President E. Y. Mullins, of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Professor Williston Walker, of Yale University; Professor J. W. Richard, of the Lutheran Theological Seminary (Gettysburg); Professor W. N. Schwarze, of the Moravian Theological Seminary; the Rt. Rev. F. F. Reese, of Savannah, Ga.; Dr. W. L. Watkinson, ex-President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference; the Rev. J. H. McNeilly, D.D., of Nashville, Tenn.; and Professor Y. Tanaka, of the Kwansei Gakuin, Kobe,

Japan. The courteous kindness with which the requested corrections and suggestions were offered has made even my sense of obligation a pleasure.

If the reader will call attention to any errors, whether of fact, inference, or emphasis, which I have not as yet been able to correct, it will be a truly appreciated service.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY, April 23, 1910.

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INTRODUCTORY.

As we go on to make acquaintance with our subject, we shall find ourselves looking at it from three distinct but closely related points of view—the *historic*, the *biblical*, the *formative*.

1. The main lines of church organization, from the apostolic period down to the present time, will have to be taken account of. For to know whence a thing came is a long step toward finding out what it is and what it stands for. Without the light of the past, indeed, the bearings of many a present fact or idea would be unintelligible. Could a man know himself with no book of memory in which to read? And history is the memory of an institution. Therefore we need to take the *historic* view-point.

2. But the pages of the history which we shall have to follow will lead back to a written record which is also history and much more. It will lead back to the Bible. In these Scriptures we shall find the origin of Christianity, and hence the germs of its subsequent organization. We shall learn something of the mind of its Author. We shall read the declaration, broad and clear, of its Divine purpose. Therefore it is needful to take the *biblical* view-point.

But in connection with these two points there arises a not uncommon historic difficulty. The sources of information, it will become evident, are insufficient for an unbroken line of knowledge. The comparatively few notices of church organization in the New Testament are not in every instance easy of interpretation. Then, too, with the close of the New Testament record, there begins a period of great obscurity—the “tunnel” period, it has been called—which continues for a generation.

True, there have not been wanting, especially of recent years, able explorers in this field—or this church-history “tunnel,” with the light at either end and almost nothing but darkness within. But when the witnesses, after more or less independent research, come to offer testimony and conclusions, they agree not among themselves. Hence, uncertainty in the mind of the learner. To

cite one prominent instance, who can be sure that he knows the origin of the single episcopate? Among the contending guides, all alert and apparently competent, the ecclesiastic tourist is liable to some bewilderment as to whose lead he would best follow.

Indeed, he will be tempted, at more points than this one, to harbor the suspicion that the unknown, and especially the unknowable, may be the occasion of much controversial speech. "Why, that question admits of no answer," said the cat to the owl, in their fabled colloquy. "Of course not," replied the bird of wisdom; "what would we philosophers have to do if the question were settled?" As with the philosophers, so sometimes with their friends the scholars and antiquarians. After all, therefore, it behooves the common man to depend somewhat on his own thinking and a great deal on his own common sense. He will be reminded, moreover, that in many things one has to rest content with the tantalizing joy of questioning, conjecture, and research.

It would be unreasonable, however, to complain of shadows that are by no means peculiar to this or any other subject of scholarly investigation. Still more unreasonable would it be, through either love or fear of the shadows, to imagine them darker than they actually are. Much is knowable. Even to those of us who must remain outside the charmed circle of expert research, and compare the conclusions of the specialists with our own scantier and less immediate knowledge, a fair construction of the Church's numerous and diverse types of polity seems quite possible.

3. There is still another direction which any seriously interested inquiry into our subject will be sure to take. Examine even a machine, utterly helpless and "dead" though it is in itself, and you will find, as the innermost thing which it contains, an idea. It is all compact of thought. No matter whether it be simple or elaborate in structure, prehistoric or modern, a mortar-and-pestle or an aëroplane, to search out the embodied thought is essentially to know the machine. And shall not the same thing be found true of an ecclesiastic structure—of any form of polity

and government built round religious experiences, ideas, and undertakings? If, then, as Dr. A. M. Fairbairn has recently phrased it, "every question in polity rests on a prior and more radical question in religion,"¹ to know the religion is to touch the heart and forecast the growth of the polity.

Therefore, that we may see more plainly how this comes to be, let us take the *formative* view-point.

And just here it may somewhat clear the way to remember the large significance of the familiar word "idea" as we shall have to use it throughout. It means a truth in the mind—a truth as apprehended. Our idea of service, unity, authority, or any other great spiritual truth, is that truth, or *Divine idea*, so far as it has made itself known to us.

But something more. Such an apprehended truth is a force. That is to say, it excites motives which move the will to action. It pulsates with energies, like a seed cast into the ground: "the seed is the word of God." Taken into heart and conscience, it bears the fruit of well-doing. Far from abiding alone, like an idle fancy or a conception in pure mathematics, it makes for character and conduct. For instance, let a Christian congregation take in the idea of a life of voluntary service to men in the name of the Son of Man, let them lift up their eyes and see the little world of their own neighborhood or the larger world of mankind as their Lord's harvest field calling for reapers; and whatever latent love for souls or passion for the glory of Christ may be in them will be quickened into activity. Or, let them have the Pauline vision of Christian unity, and so far as they are also possessed of the Pauline spirit of Christian fidelity, it will inspire them, as it inspired him, to give diligence to "keep the unity of the Spirit," both in themselves and for the whole Church, "in the bond of peace."

So likewise with all the ideas that enter into the economy and organization of the Church. Viewed from one side, they stand for truths. Viewed from the other side, they stand for forces,

¹"Studies in Religion and Theology," p. 5.

impulses, motives, aspirations, emotions, the whole inner life of a Christian congregation as it comes out in institutional expression.

Now, then, what are these ideas and feelings? how have they wrought? and what are the particular forms in which they have progressively sought embodiment? These are things which we should like to know.

As to outward forms, one has to bear in mind that, in this as well as in every other sphere of observation, they are subject to ceaseless change. Much as we sometimes wish to keep things just as they are in our natural life, for example, we find it always quite impossible. Our friends are growing older every day—like ourselves. We look into the past and are saddened at the changes time has wrought. In nature it is not only the face of the sky that is never the same from hour to hour. Who ever looked upon the same scene twice? Even

The hills are shadows and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands.

But what of it? The world within the world does not change. The laws of nature—chemical, physical, vital—which are the ever active will of the Eternal, whereby crystals are builded, and surfaces colored, and fruit ripens on its stem, and the earth steadily keeps its orbit, and human life is lived, and a myriad homes are created—these never vary and never pass away. That is an awful journey which the light of worlds invisible must make before it may paint its picture upon the sensitized plate of the photographer; but it travels in the same way as the light of the fire in your grate, and in the same way as the light which fell upon the eyes of the Hebrew patriarch when Jehovah “brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to tell them.” Matter, force, law—these persist through the ages; but these constitute the natural world, whose stability, therefore, is no less noteworthy a truth than its unceasing multitudinous changes.

And this inward stability of the natural world amid all its outward instability is a parable of the organized Church—or to

use the more significant term, of Christianity as organized. For here too the forms appear and disappear, persist and variously change, while the normative truths which the forms live upon and represent are unchangeable. These are Divine ideas, of which even more truly than of the uniformities, or laws, of nature, it may be said that amid all the mutations of time they are the same and their years do not fail. Millenniums hence they will greet whatever mind may choose to observe them, as fresh and fair in the dew of their youth as they were millenniums ago. There may be such a thing as a worn-out institution, but there can be no such thing as a worn-out truth.

Subtlest thought shall fail and learning falter,
Churches change, forms perish, come and go,
But our human needs they will not alter,
Christ no other age shall e'er outgrow.

Knighthood—to take the first example that offers—is a worn-out institution. Any attempt to resuscitate it would be worse than idle. But the truth of it, which gives its story whatever of nobility and worth it may possess in our eyes, has not been lost. More alive than ever, it is operative in new and finer forms. The reverence for womanhood, the championship of the distressed, the defense of religion, the truth of Christ and the cross, which the order of chivalry represented under the limitations of a dark and chaotic time, is far more truly embodied in the Christian Missionary Society of to-day and its sons and daughters of the Cross going forth undaunted in all the world.

Furthermore, the Christian ideas are also very high ideals. They have never yet come near being fully realized in the organization and corporate activities of any church, whether of our own or of a bygone age. This, indeed, is what might have been expected. For Christianity is equally great in the accomplished facts of redemption upon which it rests, and in the spiritual ideals which it discloses: “Be ye therefore *imitators of God as beloved children*”—the highest possible ideal—“and walk in love even as *Christ* also loved you, and *gave himself up for us*”—the all-inclusive redemptive fact.

Take again as an example such an organific idea as *service*. It is ever present to the mind of any faithful church, and is distinctly embodied in office and administration. But where is either the local congregation or the inter-congregational Christian communion, whose offices, administration, and various forms of activity, and whose spirit of service expressing itself through them, are such as it can rest in and say: "I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing?" The most faithful church will be the most likely to confess its unprofitableness, and the wisest the most likely to pray for increase of wisdom. The significance of the Young People's Societies, the Woman's Missionary Societies, the Medical Missions, the Brotherhoods, the Open Churches, the Laymen's Movement, of the present generation, is their eloquent attestation of a striving after larger service as the collective Christian aim.

Or, take the idea of *unity*. The Apostle of the Gentiles has given it inimitable expression: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all, . . . till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Let the world-wide Church give it expression in practice. Let it be shown in inter-communion, in common counsel, in coöperative activity, in whatever governmental forms may be effectual. Less than this we can hardly believe to be a fitting fulfillment of the mind of Christ and the word of his Apostle. But such unity has been, through the long centuries, only a vision. Will it ever become a fact? At any rate, it is even now an illumining vision; and every faithful congregation, living in the light of it, is doing something, consciously or unconsciously, toward its realization. Let the churches acknowledge their sins against the spiritual oneness of the Church, which sins are the chief schismatics: still the ideal abides, and not in vain. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is one of its most recent witnesses.

Therefore it is here, in "those things which are not shaken,"

even in imperishable formative truths, that the interest of our theme centers and our faith in Christianity as visible and organized securely rests.

Such, then, are the three points of view from which the ways of church organization, if any approach to a satisfactory knowledge of it is to be made, must be studied.

It may also be well, in the way of introduction, to make mention of certain determinative beliefs which will appear all through the chapters that follow :

1. A church is not essentially an organized body, but a simple brotherhood of Christians, no matter how few in number, who assemble together in the name of Christ for worship and service.
2. Under all ordinary circumstances, such a brotherhood will, as a matter of practical necessity, not only observe order in its assemblies but also develop some official organization.
3. The universal Church is to be conceived of as the aggregate of such assembling brotherhoods, with no necessary reference to organization.
4. The organizing purpose of Christianity is to promote the coming of the heavenly Father's kingdom.
5. Being a communion of Christians pledged to promote the coming of the Kingdom, a church is to be organized as a body, throughout, ministers and people alike, for active and continual service.¹
6. The teaching of the New Testament, both preceptive and historical, concerning church government, is to be reverently followed.
7. The New Testament does, with abundant illustration, teach those ideas of fellowship in Christ, social dependence, individualism, Divine vocation and appointment, representation, service, authority and obedience, unity, autonomy, evangelism, which, as various expressions of the all-inclusive principles of righteousness

¹For a somewhat fuller exposition of the foregoing principles than is given in this book, see "The Idea of the Church," pp. 3-118.

and love, must forever be embodied in the constitution and working economy of Christian churches.

8. The New Testament does not, either directly or through reasonable inference, teach that a certain designated form of government has been prescribed for the universal Church of God throughout the ages, but leaves the whole matter of ecclesiastical organization to be planned as well as administered by the Christian people themselves—the absence of a fixed and compulsory polity, as of a fixed and compulsory ritual, being an element of the universalism of Christianity.

9. The Spirit of truth, ever abiding in the brotherhood of Jesus' disciples, illumining his words and imparting grace to do the will of the heavenly Father, is to be trusted as the supreme Teacher and Leader, in matters not only of doctrine, worship, and personal conduct, but also of method and organization.

These beliefs, then, if we shall see good reason to hold them, may serve as guiding principles in our field of ecclesiologic inquiry.

The dates of the early Christian documents, both biblical and post-biblical, are, in a number of instances, still matters of controversy. The following have been accepted, in the present study, as approximately correct. Of the New Testament books: Epistles to the Thessalonians, the Corinthians, and the Galatians, 53-58; Epistle to the Romans, 55-58; Epistles to the Philippians and the Ephesians, 59-66; Epistle of James, 62 (?); First Epistle of Peter, 65, 66; Gospels of Matthew and Mark, 66-68; Epistles to Timothy and to Titus, 64-68; Hebrews, 67; Gospel of Luke, 75-80; Acts, 80-85; Gospel and Epistles of John, 90-95.

Of Patristic literature: *Epistle* of Clement of Rome, toward the close of the first century; the *Epistles of Ignatius*, first quarter of second century; the *Didache*, the *Pastor* of Hermas, Justin Martyr's *First Apology* and the *Epistle* of Polycarp to the *Philippians*, about the middle of the second century; *Sources of the Apostolic Canons*, 140-180; Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, last quar-

ter of second century; Tertullian's *Works*, second and third centuries; the Clementines, first half of third century; *Canons* of Hippolytus, 235-258; Origen, *Against Celsus* and the *Epistles* and *Treatises* of Cyprian, the middle of the third century; Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.*, first quarter of fourth century; *Epistles* and *Sermons* of Leo the Great, middle of fourth century; *Apostolic Constitutions*, the third and fourth centuries (with later additions); *Epistles* and *Treatises* of Jerome, fourth and fifth centuries; *Epistles* of Gregory the Great, near the close of the sixth century.

Now the divergences of scholarly opinion as to the dates of these sources and authorities is not to be lightly treated. But neither should its importance for the question of church organization be overestimated. And this may easily be done. Because the case is one in which the significance of the facts is really but little affected by a difference in the chronological views. The critic—to take an extreme example—who will not allow the Pastoral Epistles to be any proper part of the New Testament, but assigns to them, either in whole or in part, the very latest date that has been conjectured, will entertain no doubt that the forms of organization to which these books refer did exist when the books were written. He will also have no doubt that it had existed for a longer or a shorter period theretofore. And as to how long a period it had thus existed, he must accept the testimony of the books themselves, unless there be found some conclusive reason to the contrary. At most, as Principal T. M. Lindsay has expressed it, “the matter involved does not concern a general conception of ecclesiastical organization, but whether a certain stage of development, which did exist sometime, was of an earlier or a later appearance—a question which, when we consider the utmost limits of time involved, is comparatively unimportant.”¹

¹“The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries,” p. 138.

Part I.

BROTHERHOOD.

(1)

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee:
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

—*George Matheson.*

The Church is spiritual life—the life of individual souls—organized, knitted together in organic forms for ends of worship and service.—*W. H. Fitchett.*

When the Church takes upon itself to see to the salvation of my soul, it has done its best to ruin me for time and eternity.—*W. L. Watkinson.*

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall—
Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And having nothing yet hath all.

—*Sir Henry Wotton.*

So that each one of us stands before Thee as an only child.—*William J. Young.*

I.

THE UNIFYING TRUTH: "ONE MAN IN CHRIST JESUS."

BROTHERHOOD and organization, though somewhat near akin, are not always found together. They do not imply each other. On the one hand, there may be an unorganized brotherhood. For all like-minded people will become aware that they are fellows; and so, without a dream of organizing themselves, will be drawn into some form of actual and outward fellowship. Thus arise groups of friends, "hordes" of savages, circles of society, cliques, "gangs" of boys, and other more or less worthy and noteworthy fraternities. It is true that in all these cases there may be supposed to exist a latent tendency to organize. But the tendency may fail to become operative, and so the brotherhood remain a brotherhood only.

On the other hand, there may be a non-fraternal organization. This will appear when men unite as coworkers, under the principle of the division of labor, through purely self-regarding motives. It may be, for example, the case of a business partnership. Or it may be that of an employer with a number of employees, each discharging his particular and appointed function, in the various processes of some mercantile or productive industry. It is quite possible for such men to work side by side for one-third of their time, and yet be actuated by a brotherly spirit little more than are the papers they sign, the tools they handle, or the machinery they manage.

But the higher type of organization is that which is developed out of brotherhood. It is an inner life and fellow-feeling finding organs of activity—then regularly and variously at work for some common purpose. And here the preëminent example is that institutional representative of the kingdom of God on earth, the Church of Christ. A church in the New Testament time was, first of all, a simple Christian brotherhood, which afterwards,

through the necessities of its own urgent outreaching life, became an organization. In fact, it became an organization very soon—almost from the beginning. And such will be the way of Christianity always and everywhere. A Christian church takes form not as a mere brotherhood, and still less as a mere organization. It appears as a *brotherhood organized*.¹

I. CHRIST AS THE UNIFYING TRUTH.

This brotherhood as organized is our subject of study. Let us begin with an inquiry as to the unifying truth, the creative idea, the formative force—all these being different names for the same thing—that brings people together into a church and organizes that church for growth and usefulness in the world. For some such unifying truth there must be. Just as a tree of the forest grows up and lives its life about a certain divine idea, enshrining a divine purpose, so is it with human society, and so very manifestly with the Church of God. The tree of course does all this unconsciously—the consciousness being solely in Him who is making the tree. But in the case of social organization, this idea and purpose is to be shared by the society itself, and to be consciously its bond of union. Men, in their freedom, are thus to become workers together with God for the achievement of his purpose. What, therefore, in the case of the Church, may we recognize as this conscious bond of union?

The answer is *Jesus Christ*. It is the divine idea and purpose that men should be made Christlike, or, what is the same thing, that they should become in spirit and character sons of God. For this, accordingly, God sent redemption into the world, that all who would might be “conformed to the image of his Son.” How? Through the knowledge of him, through faith in him, through communion with him, through obedience to him, who is himself the image of the invisible God. In a word, through *Christianity*.

And, moreover, as men, believing in Christ, become responsive

¹“The Idea of the Church,” pp. 51, 52; 95 ff.

to his transforming power, they come into spiritual unity with one another. For they become sharers of the one mind that was in him, and take up their several interrelated tasks in the doing of the one work which he has commanded. Christ who is "all" is also "*in* all." Such is the origin of the Church; and such, nothing less and nothing other, is the unity of the Church.

Now the extraordinary influence of the personality of Christ upon the men and women who first became his disciples is unquestionable. It woke such a response as human hearts had nowhere made before. It was a compelling and a cumulative power. Cumulative not only as long as he was visibly with them; for after his going away he came to them again, in closer relationship, even in the Spirit, and gained the completer mastery of their lives.

What, then, was the vision of the Divine One—for surely we shall find it to be nothing less—which, when these persons saw it in Jesus, made them not only his individual followers but also, and very manifestly, his *congregation*? It is altogether unlikely that they attempted, after any theological manner, to analyze his character or number his "offices" or reason out to a satisfactory conclusion the truth of his nature. That came some generations later. Do we occupy our minds with a systematic attempt to analyze the nature and endowments of the man who is making himself our friend? We only know and feel the new personality that enters with a certain peaceful constraining power into our lives. Much more may we believe this to have been true of the first disciples and friends of the Lord Jesus. He was to them more and more a presence, a personality, known by its effects in their innermost being, as if it were life itself. Indeed, he was the Life, and was continually giving himself, giving them of his own—"that they might have it very abundantly."

Yet it is no less than the duty of thoughtful Christian love to make answer to the Master's own question: "Who say ye that I am?" What was it in Jesus of Nazareth that, in the New Testament time, drew men to him as his disciples and congregations?

As a matter of fact, all men were not drawn to him. Many

were not. Some utterly rejected the claim that he put forth, and had him condemned to the death of the cross. Even after the Resurrection and Pentecost, some, so far from acknowledging the Master, persecuted his disciples unto prison and unto death. Very many more seem to have passed him by in a spirit of indifference. As it is in the twentieth century, so was it in the first: "*My sheep* hear my voice." What then was the attractive power which won those who did yield allegiance to Jesus and form a Christian brotherhood about him?

That attraction was the awakening of the sense of spiritual needs and possibilities, and the satisfaction that such a hunger of the spirit received from him. It was said of the poet-philosopher Coleridge by one of his friends: "He wanted better bread than can be made of wheat." So does every man; but especially so does the man in whom hunger of the spirit, which is his deepest self, is awakened. But nowhere else does this cry of want find the answer which it has found in Jesus, the very Bread of God. Those upon whom that offer had power, in the beginning of the gospel, came to him, gave him their hearts, obeyed his words.

For one thing, they beheld in him, as it had never appeared to them before, *the revelation of spiritual truth*. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him."¹ But for stronger reasons also than the marvelous physical signs that thus impressed Nicodemus, Jesus was recognized as "a teacher come from God." That is to say, the teaching itself was a greater "sign." It stirred the deepest intuitions of the religious nature, broke the slumber of the soul, searched the conscience, opened up the realm of spiritual reality, as this had not been done by the wisest and best who had gone before. They, indeed, as prophets of Jehovah, received messages from on high for Israel; but he dwelt perpetually in the light of God's eternal love, without a cloud between, and out of the revelations of

¹John iii. 2.

that Presence taught the people. "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself, but the Father abiding in me doeth his works"—the words of Jesus, which were the *works* of the Father. And a still greater sign—though one that should be much "spoken against"—was the prophet-teacher himself. He not only revealed the truth—peerless and priceless as were his utterances: he himself was the revelation. For that which he spoke he was. By continual self-expression, in word and look and deed, he showed himself to be the very Truth and Wisdom of God. It was not as if a torchbearer came uplifting a torch; the light shone from within, from the Man, "as the sun shineth in his strength." "The WORD became flesh." Is it any wonder that those who were "of the truth" should be attracted to him and consent to group themselves about him as a company of learners? "One is your *teacher*, and all ye are *brethren*."¹

But to say that Jesus was the highest truth incarnate is only another way of confessing his perfect rightness of nature. Men who had eyes to see did see in him *the Divine holiness*. It was not simply that he could challenge opponents to break the force of his teaching or of his personal claim by pointing out any moral obliquity in his life: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?"² That were a comparatively little thing. The great fact is that the self-consciousness of Jesus, as expressed in the whole course of his recorded history, was the consciousness of entire oneness with the Father. A petition for the forgiveness of trespasses, such as he taught the disciples to offer when they prayed, would not only be unthinkable on his lips now by those who believe upon him, but it must have been so then.

Simon Peter often spoke in a truly representative character, but never more so, we may believe, than when he cried: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."³ It was personal unworthiness bearing witness to the Worthy One, the sense of sin becoming intolerable in the presence of the visualized holiness of God.

¹Matt. xxiii. 8-10.

²John viii. 46.

³Luke v. 8.

Not only so. Men of faith found in Jesus the *mastership of the spirit*. For holiness is power. It is the moral law personalized. The sinner, even though resisting its claim, stands in awe of it, acknowledging its sovereign right to obedience. It is a celestial vision that must speak in imperatives. And the human soul needs such an imperative. It needs to say "Lord," and instinctively feels after some one greater than itself whom it may reverence, trust, honor, follow, obey. So the disciples of Jesus, finding the very sovereignty of the spirit in him, called him not only teacher but *Lord*. It was his to command, theirs to obey. Gentle, sympathetic, considerate, ministrant, declaring on the night of his betrayal, "No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends,"¹ yet the sovereign of the soul, whose word was law. "Ye are my friends, if ye do *the things which I command you*." "Ye call me Master [Teacher] and *Lord*; and ye say well, for so I am."² To them, therefore, as to those who learned his name afterwards through the gospel and the interpreting Spirit, Jesus was the *Lord* Jesus Christ. And well might the willing servants of the one Master, uniting to keep his commandments, form a household about him.

Moreover, such a Master, exemplifying in daily life all grace and truth, would become their *spiritual Ideal*. Did he not distinctly offer himself as an example to be followed by them all? "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister."³ "For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you."⁴ To become Christlike, changed into the spiritual splendor of his image, was unquestionably the Christian ideal. The uttermost self-sacrifice must be accepted by the disciples of him who went in unspeakable suffering, but with undeviating footstep, to the death of the cross. "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."⁵ Nor can they picture to themselves any happier immortality than to be

¹John xv. 15. ²John xiii. 13. ³Matt. xx. 28. ⁴John xiii. 15. ⁵1 John iii. 16.

gathered into his everlasting kingdom as sons of God, and seeing him as he is, to become like him.¹

But this was not all. The crowning glory of Jesus was his *atoning love*. He was the Lord *Jesus*. Whatever of victory or deliverance could have been signified by such a name, through all the momentous history of ancient Israel, was fulfilled far beyond the most daring dream of parent or prophet, by him who bore that saving name from Bethlehem to Calvary and on into the world of the Resurrection. His victory was victory over death. His deliverance was deliverance from the awful tyranny and doom of sin. "Who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."²

It was other truths than this, indeed, that first made the Twelve his disciples; because at the beginning this truth was undiscovered by them. Not that his love was undiscovered by them; for how could such love and sympathy as thrilled through the life of Jesus fail of some conquering effect upon even the least responsive heart? "Let us also go, that we may die with him." But it was the truth of atoning love as enthroned forever in his cross and resurrection that, under the illumination of the Spirit, won them to the deeper discipleship and the immortal hopes of their after life. Now they could rejoice to be "counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." Now they could pass through death to the Risen One, to be with him again and evermore. Now the cross, which had once tended to divide and scatter—"every man to his own"—was drawing them into real communion with himself and with one another. No wonder if on the day of Pentecost, or on any other day, the followers of their glorified Master should be found "*all together* in one place."

And when the later Christians, like Saul of Tarsus, who had not seen him in the flesh, were led to confess "the Name," they began as believers where those earlier believers were perfected. They bowed the knee, first of all, not to the Man of Galilee but to the Man of Calvary, exalted to be both Prince and Saviour,

¹1 John iii. 2.

²1 Cor. i. 30.

in whom was the forgiveness of sins and the new birth into the truth and grace and kingdom of the Heavenly Father.

Who, then, was the Jesus of the Gospels? The authoritative Teacher, the Holy One and the Righteous, the Lord of the conscience, the Ideal of moral perfection, the Divine Saviour of the world. "Who say ye that I am?" The Christ; but greater immeasurably than was predicted or known of old. "And upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no man knoweth but he himself."¹

"Jesus!" name of wondrous love,
Human name of God above.

Reverently, gladly, would we draw near and bow the knee before him—Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh.

Is it possible, then, that there should be doubting inquiry as to what is the unifying truth of the Church? Must it not be that since his coming into the world the "Churches of God" not only "in Judæa" but everywhere should be "in *Christ Jesus?*" Were not the Gentiles, once pagans and far off, brought nigh in him to their brethren in Israel; so that of the twain were made "one new man," with access "in one Spirit unto the Father?" Mark the ever-recurring language of the New Testament, "with Christ," "through Christ," "unto Christ," "by Jesus Christ," "in the name of Jesus Christ," "for Christ's sake," "in Christ;" listen to the hymns of the ages; read the theological literature of the present-day Church. In it all appears the same supreme and ineffable Personality, "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God," the organizing wisdom and power of both the individual and the collective life. People becoming Christians gather themselves together into a church—it cannot be otherwise than in Christ.

2. THE RESPONSE OF LOVE—IN EMOTION, WILL, SERVICE.

The one most inclusive word to represent the Divine redeeming activity toward the world in Jesus Christ is the word *love*. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son."

¹Rev. xix. 12.

²1 Thess. ii. 14.

³Eph. ii. 13-18.

“Who loved me, and gave himself up for me.” In like manner the one best verbal expression of the response of the believing soul to its Redeemer is this same word, *love*. “We love because he first loved us.”

But the greatest words, which are likely to be the commonest, are often the most poorly appreciated or understood. When spoken they convey different meanings to different minds, according to the different ideas of the hearer concerning the thing which is named by them. Now love is one of the everyday words of human speech; and we need hardly be reminded of the widely different meanings which it bears when used with reference to the various relationships of life or to the various temperaments and preferences of individuals.

Let us ask, therefore, What is love to Christ, as we may believe that Christ himself meant it to be? The word *to love*, in his teaching, is uniformly a word (*ἀγαπάω*) which, while leaving out the idea of fondness, connotes such nobler feelings as regard, veneration, and devotedness, expressing themselves in a distinctly favorable attitude of will toward its object. The substantive form of the word (*ἀγάπη*) is not to be found in classical literature. Apparently it had to be formed by the New Testament writers to express the revelation in Jesus of God's attitude toward the world—“for God is love [*ἀγάπη*]”—and the attitude of the responsive heart which “loves because he first loved us.”

May this love to Christ express itself in emotion? In some form of emotion, differing with differences of human temperament, it will undoubtedly find expression. Of Jehovah himself it is written: “He will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”¹ Psalmists had made not only the promises but the very statutes of God their “songs.” As Jesus stood at the grave of his friend Lazarus, or looked from Olivet upon the doomed City of the Great King, his eyes overfilled with tears.

¹Zeph. iii. 17:

But the test of love is not in the emotions. It is in the attitude of the will. And this is no mystic doctrine: we may readily see how it is true. Because love is a desire for the welfare of its object, and as such it will incite to the voluntary doing of acts to promote that welfare. But a voluntary act is a thing of the will. Wherever else love may abide, therefore, this is true, that it abides in the will. Wherever else it may be, it is there, ever there, moving the will to certain acts and courses of action—to service, obedience, self-giving. Its reality is tested and its strength measured by the energy of the will to do kind and helpful deeds. Such, accordingly, is the teaching of Jesus, and of the example of those who have given their hearts to him. “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.”¹ “Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. . . . Tend my sheep.”² “What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”³ So, then, the regular and effective expression of the Christian’s love is in his will.

And this attitude of heart and will toward Christ involves the like attitude toward God the Father and one’s fellow-men. It is the determination of the whole man, in Christ’s name, to “do good to all beings capable of good,” oneself included. Its spirit is by no means averse to singing songs or shedding tears, but its habit is the daily and perpetual doing of God’s will. For Jesus’s own life of love was to do this one thing, even the will of the Father who sent him.

3. BUT IS NOT SELF-LOVE A COMMON MOTIVE OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

Now the question may arise, whether love to others is the sole or even the chief motive that draws men together in church membership. Does not one seek admission into the Christian congregation for one’s own sake? Is it not to help secure one’s

¹John xxi. 14, 21.

²John xxi. 16.

³Acts xxi. 13.

own salvation? is there not the motive of self-love in the act? And has it not been so from the beginning? To such questioning no other than an affirmative reply can be returned.¹ Indeed, as just said, in love's desire to do good to everybody oneself is included. Nor can there be anything wrong in such a motive; for who can forget that Jesus once and again invites men to come unto him for their own good? Let us look, for illustration, into the content of a single one of these great words of the Master: "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." Does the soul thirst for knowledge? for righteousness? for love? for life—even to be brought into communion with the living God, so as to live indeed? All these are for itself. All may be desired with a self-regarding motive. This is undeniable.

But in such self-love there is nothing inconsistent with love for others. On the contrary, the two agree perfectly together. Indeed, they are necessary to each other. On this plane of the highest things, to seek one's own is to seek others' good, and to seek others' is to seek one's own. So long as self-love is not perverted into selfishness, or love to others into sentimentality, personal experience will prove them to be fellow-helpers of the universal good.

Yet it is also true that in the progressive experience of the things of the Spirit, the *conscious* seeking of one's personal good becomes less and less, while love to Christ, service for the world, the doing of the Heavenly Father's will, is rejoiced in more and more as its own exceeding great reward. Undoubtedly the line of progress lies in this direction. Whatever spiritual stations, Bethels or Peniels, may be reached and passed, the height of Christian attainment beyond which no higher can be seen, is:

¹There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, a "desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins."—*General Rules of the United Society* [of Methodists].

Dearly beloved, you profess to have a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from your sins; you seek the fellowship of the people of God, to assist you in working out your salvation.—*Form of the Reception of Members into the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.*

"That Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death, for to me *to live is Christ.*"

4. LOVE AMID ITS ANTAGONISTS.

After all, is here a fair, unbiased account, true to sober reason, of the formative and sustaining spirit of the Christian churches?

The unsympathizing observer may be disposed to laugh this account to scorn. Looking at these churches from outside, and glancing back perhaps along the line of ecclesiastical history, it is, no such celestial picture, he says, that meets the eye. It is no such high-tuned explanation of the nature and genesis of the numerous ecclesiasticisms around us, that can be reasonably accepted as in harmony with the facts. Not only self-love, but bigotry, worldliness, lust of power, lust of praise, rivalry, strife, ill-will, persecution, sectarianism, self-seeking in many ugly forms, have always been characteristic of the Church. And all this must be taken into the account in describing its formative principle and process. Thus runs the criticism.

Nor is such an indictment to be, in turn, laughed to scorn; for it contains much unwelcome truth. It is certainly true that after churches have been established far and wide, and especially when tempted by the favor of society or of the State, they are likely to be corrupted. It is also true that under any circumstances, even the most favorable, they will show no lack of serious faults. In knowledge they are far from infallibility; in character they are manifestly not composed of "spirits of just men made perfect." In the case of Christian churches formed, for example, in pagan communities of the present day, or in apostolic times, evil tempers will flash out and grievous sins may be committed. Even such a case as that of the rising Christian community in the Holy City a few days after Pentecost will prove to be no exception.

But while all this is true, it is not *the* truth. There is such a fact as organized Christianity. There are real churches of Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding their numerous and painful imperfections, any fair-minded observer would willingly call them by that

name. So far, then, as they are true to their great name, what is their animating spirit, the secret of their power, the unseen life that attempts to put forth its proper organs of growth and achievement? That is the question; and the satisfactory answer can be found only in love to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But if this be true, we should expect to find, as a confirmatory proof, that here also is the source of the *renewal* of life. And do we not find it to be so? The individual Christian knows full well that it is so with himself; and what is true of each separate soul is equally true of a society of souls. For each personally and for all as a body, to come back to Christ from any path of spiritual declension is to come back to the source of life and to begin again to ascend the heights of vision and power.

Under the civil government the heart of true citizenship is not in a bare submission to law for the sake of avoiding its penalties or gaining some selfish advantage in politics or trade. It is patriotism, which is a form of moral love that oftentimes proves its existence quite unexpectedly. In time of national peace and prosperity, for example, it may seem that citizenship is little more than a means of self-protection and gain. Politics—what is it but a game which those who have a liking for it play for their own gratification? The people—are they not given up to pleasure-seeking and money-making, and ready at any time to deceive and defraud the government? Patriotism—is it not a mere enthusiast's iridescent dream? But if so, let it be asked in reply: How came the idea of love of country into the mind of the earliest ages and of the whole world? what has made the word *patriotism*, in all elevated and earnest speech concerning one's native land, a word of inspiring truth and power? and what mean the emotions that gather about that yard or two of linen or other fabric which is unfurled as the national flag? Let some awful crisis impend. Let a war for the nation's life arise. All over the land a seemingly new and strange spirit of uncalculating sacrifice will assert itself. Careless youth will be suddenly transformed into self-devoted manhood. And no accusation of hypocrisy will be made when from the pitiless field of battle there

comes back the testimony of surrendered lives: "I am willing to die for my country."

But how much more believable is it that membership in that Institution whose inner motive is Christianity, whose Founder is confessed as the Saviour of men, whose martyrs and missionaries are in all the world, whose thousand ministrations to the needy in body and in spirit are so familiar as to pass unnoticed, whose divinely appointed end is the realization of the kingdom of God on earth—how much more believable is it that the very heart and crown of membership in the Church of God should be love to God in Jesus Christ and to men in Christ's name?

II.

SOCIAL DEPENDENCE: ADMISSION INTO MEMBERSHIP.

EVERY man is no less truly a companion than a person. Without association with others he could no more attain to a clear human consciousness than without a sense of his own personality. Nobody is self-sufficing. "One is always somebody's child." Out of companionship and into it we all are born. In any path of life, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, it is impossible to walk alone. Let not the lover of sacred solitude imagine himself an exception. It was a wise person who said to young Wesley when a secluded student at Oxford: "You must find companions or make them; the Bible knows nothing of a solitary religion." No solitude is sacred enough to build walls about a soul.

I. CHRISTIANITY A SOCIAL RELIGION.

In the spiritual life this need of companionship is most completely fulfilled in the divine ordinance of the Church. Here, therefore, we find ourselves still in the presence of the truth, that fellowship with Christ will draw men together into a fellowship *in* him. Disciples of the one Teacher, servants of the one Master, imitators of the one Example, believers in the one sinless Saviour, they come through this supreme relationship into the spiritual kinship of brothers one of another. "Ye are one man *in Christ Jesus*."¹

¹It was perhaps the most ardent and influential advocate of monasticism in the early Church that gave a young monk such counsel as this: "The first point to be considered is whether you are to live by yourself or in a monastery with others. For my part, I should like you to have the society of holy men, so as not to be thrown altogether on your own resources. For if you set out on a road that is new to you without a guide, you are sure to turn aside immediately. . . . In loneliness pride quickly creeps upon a man." (Jerome, *To Rusticus*, *Ep.* cxxv., c. 9.) Compare Martin Luther's experience: "I myself have found that I never fell into more sin than when I was alone."—"Table Talk," DCLXIII.

Notably different is the case of a typical pagan cult. Here, notwithstanding religious festivals and a general like-mindedness which makes for fraternity, the dominant motive is the desire to propitiate offended deities. Hence a priesthood appears with its pretended but welcome mediation. Through the priest the individual worshiper makes his offering and hopes to win the favor of the gods. The sacerdotal transaction represents substantially the whole of religion. There is no special demand for an intercommunion of the devotees or a dependence on one another in their daily religious life. The idea of brotherhood is without any proper embodiment.

In a pure form of Christianity, on the contrary, the law of brotherly love is regnant: no priest intervenes between the soul and the one common Saviour; religion, not ceremonial but vital, embraces the whole of life and calls for unceasing moral endeavor; every possible help, human as well as directly Divine, is needed; interchange of experiences, sympathy, mutual service, coöperation, are called for; meetings and associations are inevitable. "If they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up!"¹ "According as each has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves."²

What is the architectural design of the pagan temple-builder? A house for the occupancy of a god. What of the Christian architect? A house of worship and of service for the occupancy of the people. "God and one man," it has been said, "will serve for any religion except Christianity." Even in that most perfect picture of individualism in religion, "The Pilgrim's Progress," Christian must have his strength renewed in the Palace Beautiful amid congenial spirits, and must fall in with Faithful and other companions by the way.

While Christian is among his godly friends,
Their golden mouths make him sufficient mends
For all his griefs.

¹Eccles. iv. 10.

²1 Pet. iv. 10.

Now this social need was distinctly provided for in the very beginning of the gospel. We can hardly conceive of a stronger emphasis on the social element in religion than that which Jesus gave. He declared himself present, though unseen, with his true disciples in any congregation of them on earth—"where two or three are gathered together" in his name. And just as when he promises to make his abode with the man who keeps his word,¹ it is shown that he wills that men shall keep his word, and just as when he promises to be with those who teach and preach his gospel, "alway, even unto the end of the world," it is shown that he wills that his messengers shall teach and preach, so likewise when he promises to be in the congregations of his disciples, it is shown that he wills that they shall meet together in congregations.

But it is not only in verbal teaching that Jesus sets forth the sociality of religion. He shows it also and chiefly in his life. No recluse, no separatist, but the holy Friend of even the most despised, and a seeker of friends—such was he who uniformly spoke of himself as the Son of Man.

To Jesus, indeed, the will of the Father was the all of life; but a very large part of that will was brotherhood: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." He made a household of the Twelve and lived among them. Their lack of insight and sympathy grieved him to the heart: "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" Yet he loved them unto the end; while for the eternal future it was his prayer, "I will that where I am, they also may be with me,"² and his word of assurance: "That where I am, there ye may be also."³ Having gone away, he came again in the glory of the resurrection, and was made known to them, as a foretoken of the heavenly life, in the breaking of bread, and in other social acts. When he spoke of the kingdom of God, whether present or future, he would sometimes use the old-time social figure of a table at which the redeemed were to sit down together, partaking of a common meal.⁴

¹John xiv. 23. ²John xvii. 24. ³John xiv. 3.

⁴Matt. xxii. 4; xxvi. 29; Luke xiv. 15; xxii. 30.

It was in the spirit of the Master, therefore, that those whom he sent forth from immediate companionship with himself became seekers and promoters of fellowship. They would share with others the new life which they themselves had received, "the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested" in his Son Jesus Christ. "That which we have seen and heard," says one of them, "declare we unto you also, that ye also may *have fellowship with us.*"¹

Accordingly the response of those upon whom such an appeal has power will be to enter into this fellowship of the new life. "This Jesus whom," said Paul to the people of Thessalonica, "I proclaim unto you is the Christ. And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with [*προσεκληρώθησαν*, cast in their lots with, were Divinely allotted to] Paul and Silas."² It will always be so. To win believers in Jesus is to make them brethren. They will cast in their lots with their fellow-Christians.

It might be remarked, parenthetically, that even the meeting-places of the early Christians were distinctly promotive of fellowship. In our own day, the most sociable of all the meetings of a church are likely to be those that are held in the homes of fellow church members; and such of necessity were congregational meetings for more than a hundred years of Christianity. There were no church edifices, and it was in the homes of their friends and brethren that those who had *cast in their lots with one another* as followers of Jesus habitually met together.

But a far stronger figure is used. One of these same two apostles with whom the Thessalonian converts consorted made use of it in an epistle to Gentile Christians. Let us recall it: "That he might create in himself of twain one new man."³ Of what twain? Of two peoples that had long been at enmity, not indifferent nor simply alienated, but bitterly antagonistic. Think how the Jew had regarded the Gentile and the Gentile the Jew through ages and generations. But now the soul of the Jew and the soul of the Gentile were reconciled, brought into

¹ 1 John i. 3.² Acts xvii. 3, 4.³ Eph. ii. 15.

oneness of spirit and aim, in being both reconciled to God in Jesus Christ. It was even this twain that became *one new man*. At the cross the insurmountable barrier had been broken down. And such, in its crowning example, was the genesis of the Christian Church.

Unquestionably, then, the power of Christ was creative of a new individual. First of all, a new individual. But it was also creative of a new fellowship. Christians were not simply so many separate persons; they at once became a *people*, a *race*, a *nation*, a *priesthood*. So declares the first of Jesus's confessing disciples: "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession."¹

2. SOCIAL DEPENDENCE IN WORSHIP AND IN WORK.

In two things that might be particularly noted does this Christian social dependence appear: in worship and in the extension of Christ's kingdom.

First, in *worship*. Now it is true that the soul must come to God alone. Otherwise it can hardly be said to know him at all. As truly as if there were no other being in the universe except the Creator and myself must I listen to his voice and speak to him in whose hand my life is. Nevertheless, all answers to prayer are not received by the solitary worshiper. Some are specifically promised to the worshiping assemblage. It may be a very small assemblage; but any real Christian communion will open the heart to receive a greater blessing from on high: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven."² And no petition that is either unbelieving or *unloving* may hope to be heard.³ "But tarry ye in the city," was the Master's word, "until ye be clothed with power from on high;"⁴ and it was when "they were all together in one place" that the garment of power descended upon them.

The Lord's Supper also, the sacrament which the ever-living

¹1 Pet. ii. 9. ²Matt. xviii. 19. ³Mark xi. 24, 25. ⁴Luke xxiv. 49.

Saviour has given us of trust and love toward himself, calls most truly and tenderly for trust and love toward each other. "Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread."¹

Secondly. As in the case of spiritual receptivity in worship, so in that of effectiveness in *extending Christ's kingdom* brotherhood is needed. Are Christians to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ? The peculiar power of an army, as compared with any equal number of brave men, is in systematic coöperation. Are Christians coworkers with Christ for the redemption of the world? Good feeling, harmony, a common aim, the division of labor, will multiply the efficiency of the individual laborer many fold. "I beseech thee also, true *yokefellow*, help those women, for they *labored with me* in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my *fellow-workers*."² "And he called unto him the Twelve, and began to send them forth by *two and two*."³

There may be solitary workers, each doing what he can in his own line without contact with others. There may be competitive workers, each endeavoring to surpass others, oftentimes to their disadvantage. But the great body of the world's work is done by associated workers, each depending on others and depended on by them, each assisting others and assisted by them.

Need we be reminded that in Christianity this coöperative method, which has been illustrated from the beginning, must continue unto the end? Coöperation is the method of the kingdom of God—here and we may believe hereafter. For let us consider: Is solitariness the law of the universe? Is competition? And what, on the other hand, shall be said of coöperation?

3. THE CHURCH IDEA IN THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES.

Social dependence, as illustrated thus in worship and in work, will help to explain the prominence of the Church idea in the books of the New Testament that follow the Gospels. For this idea is very prominent in these books. The very literary form

¹1 Cor. x. 17.

²Phil. iv. 3.

³Mark vi. 7.

which most of them have taken is suggestive of it; they are not treatises, but letters written to be read aloud in congregations.

Except as a social institution, Christianity could not have made an effective start or gathered its forces for subsequent progress and achievement. Therefore even in the apostolic period it must embody itself not only in persons but also in societies—"a *city* set on a hill."

Of course it is not simply that Christ's people should be congregated or made to live side by side in the same group by some external authority; for in such a case proximity might not prove to be helpfulness. The uniting pressure must come from within, like the informing and uniting life force of any organism. It must be a spirit of truth and love. The plants of a garden bed or the trees of the forest grow side by side, but instead of helping they hinder one another. A congregation of Jesus Christ must be organically—which is to say, vitally—interrelated; not like the collective plants in a garden bed, but like the several organs of the individual plant, which are each for all and all for each. The man that has found his Father in heaven instinctively seeks his brother on earth; and the two brothers are to become one, mutually serviceable, in Christ.

Many, it is true, are the sinful interferences, the misunderstandings, strifes, and envyings, that hinder and oftentimes destroy this unity of the Spirit. But the idea persists, and, in proportion as the Christianity professed is real, clothes itself in everyday fact. It is the ethical idea of "mutualism" glorified. "Bear ye one another's burdens," says Paul to his Galatian converts, and immediately illumines the precept with an interpretation of the teaching of Jesus, "and so fulfill the *law of Christ*." Even between the chief of the apostles and the humblest Christian brother, it is a reciprocal service that is due: "I long to see you, . . . that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine."¹ Alike in the first age and in all after ages, the Church, so far as it has kept true to its heavenly

¹Rom. i. 11, 12.

calling, has been, in the highest sense known on earth, a mutual aid society.

A mutual aid society? Truly so; but much more than that. Such a name does not go far enough within. The Church is a Christian life society. It has not merely a corporate existence, but a corporate *life*. And to this corporate life each individual member is to make his contribution, and from it to receive spiritual quickening. Attend upon some congregation's worship on the Sabbath day, be present at its social meetings, make acquaintance with its members, hear about its plans and undertakings, listen to the sermons, take part in the work. Come thus into sympathetic contact with that Church. And you have thereby put yourself into contact with not simply an individual but a collective life. Disregarding whatever evil tempers may have intruded to weaken or pollute it, what is it that you receive? A spirit of worship and service; a spirit of prayer, penitence, aspiration, effort, faith, hope, love, enterprise for the kingdom of God; the spirit of Christianity. When a church is organized in any community, it is this life that is organized. All may share it if they will. The Christian disciple will not shut himself off from its inflowing. Nor is there a Christian disciple but may add something to its volume and intensity.

4. ORIGINAL AND LATER CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP.

Now, for the maintenance of such a society in its integrity two economic regulations are necessary: There must be conditions of membership and the administration of discipline.

First, there must be *conditions of membership*. Because the unfit member may prove a hindrance both to communion and service; for the closer the relationship, the greater the power either to benefit or to trouble, to make or to mar.

Let us trace briefly the history of this regulation. Beginning with the apostolic age, we see at first not so much conditions of church membership as conditions of personal salvation. These conditions, expressed in a word, were faith in Jesus as the Christ. But this faith included *repentance*, and was professed in the rite

of Christian *baptism*. If it be asked, then, who might be received into an apostolic church, the answer is: Those who were presumably in the way of salvation. Baptism, however, being the outward ordinance through which the profession was made, may be called the door of admission into this visible fellowship of Christ's people.

Moreover, was it not a door which any true teacher or preacher of the gospel was authorized to open? Neither the Apostle to the Gentiles,¹ nor Philip (a distributor of church funds),² nor Ananias (apparently what we should call a layman),³ waited for any other authority for baptizing his converts than that under which he had been already sent forth with the word of life. Nor is there any evidence that after baptism the formal vote of a congregation or of a body of representative officers was necessary to admit the new believer into actual membership in a local church. The probability would certainly seem to be that, unless objection were raised, he was informally and gladly welcomed to communion and coöperation with his brethren.⁴

Of a course of probation or of catechetical instruction for church membership there is likewise no evidence. That in certain instances, however, even in that day of the manifold gifts of the Spirit, and of apostolic oversight, such a course should have been required, cannot be declared impossible.

In the sub-apostolic age we do find some specific preparation

¹1 Cor. i. 17.

²Acts ix. 10-19.

³Acts viii. 12.

⁴"We have in the case of Paul a very interesting statement (Acts ix. 26), that 'when he was come to Jerusalem he essayed to join himself to the disciples, and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple; but Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles,' etc. From this it would appear that there had to be application for membership, and that it was not always granted without some consideration in the case of doubtful persons. . . . And the right of passing upon members is distinctly implied . . . in Romans xiv. 1, where the Apostle exhorts the brethren to receive even those who are weak in the faith, provided, of course, their faith was genuine." (Dargan, "Ecclesiology," pp. 37-39.) But it is only through an extremely doubtful exegesis that the first-cited passage can be made to yield a case of application for membership, or the other a case of congregational voting.

for reception through baptism into the Church. The candidate must be instructed, must show that he is convinced of the truths of the gospel, and must pray with fasting and confession of sin.¹

In the latter part of the third century, and especially in the fourth century, this preparation for church membership in the case of converts from non-Christian faiths, whether Jewish, pagan, or heretical, became very elaborate. The candidates were called catechumens, the name indicating that they were distinctively subjects of instruction. These instructed ones were divided into three classes: (1) the "hearers" (*audientes*), who were permitted to come into the congregation to hear the reading of the Scriptures and the preaching, but must then retire; (2) the "kneelers" (*genuflectentes*), who, in addition to hearing the Scriptures and the sermon, might kneel and pray; (3) the "qualified" (*competentes*), who, having passed through the intervening stages, might offer themselves for baptism.

These were now instructed in the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the nature of the sacraments—indeed, it would seem, in a fairly complete body of doctrine; and this course of instruction having been given, they were received on profession of faith, through baptism, into the fellowship of the Church. The whole period of probation sometimes lasted two or three years; though much depended here upon the character of the candidate.²

Now the spirit of evangelic freedom would pronounce the ancient catechumenate too long-continued and too formal a process.

¹"But before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whatever others can; but thou shalt order the baptized to fast one or two weeks before." (Didache, c. 7.)

"As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and regenerated in the same manner in which we ourselves were regenerated." (Justin Martyr, First Apol., c. 61.)

²"Let him who is to be a catechumen be a catechumen for three years; but if any one be diligent, and have a good will to his business, let him be admitted; for it is not the length of time but the course of life that is judged." (Const. Apostol., Bk. VIII., c. 32.)

It is difficult to see in it a picture of the good Shepherd bringing home his sheep that was lost. Let the adverse verdict stand. But let it be modified by the consideration that these catechumens were for the most part men and women who from childhood had been thoroughly imbued with the ideas and sentiments of paganism, and who, experience had taught, should not without much care be admitted to the full privileges of the Christian household. In fact, it is a similar probation in which many applicants for admission into the Church are held by Christian missionaries of the present day.¹

Let it also be borne in mind that the baptism which closed the long period of disciplinary waiting must have been profoundly impressive. No wonder that it should have been spoken of in the pictorial language of the time as the new birth of the soul.

But this preparatory catechumenate was not perpetuated. After the sixth century it seems to have fallen into a disuse that gradually became universal. This was due to the magical and worldly conception of the Church that was prevalent under Constantine and his successors. As the ministry became more and more completely a priesthood, less emphasis was laid upon the patient and difficult work of teaching; and, moreover, the profession of the state religion came to be little more than a politico-religious form. Accordingly baptism was administered not only to all infants, but without moral or theological requirements to people generally. Whole tribes of barbarians, for instance, were brought out of heathenism into the Church, with no course of preparatory instruction, and with a baptism that was practically forced upon them.

Multitudinism gained the ascendancy. Wherever Christianity was organized, the whole population was regarded as legitimately included in its membership. From the too protracted probation of the catechumenate, the ecclesiastical pendulum swung to

¹I have heard a missionary to China say, "The trouble now is not so much to get people into the Church as to keep them out"—till they should be sufficiently instructed and should give evidence of a genuine Christian faith.

the opposite extreme of not only no probation at all (as apparently in the New Testament period) but of no proper requirements of any kind for admission to the Christian brotherhood. Indeed, where did the Christian brotherhood—which in every age is the true Church—exist, except here and there in little companies of elect souls? The Church as organized had become the sacerdotal clergy, appointed to put the souls of all men into the way of salvation, and to keep them there, chiefly through the merit of good works and the impartation of sacramental grace.

In the Eastern and the Roman Church this same theory has been practiced, as far as circumstances are favorable, unto the present day.

In the State Churches of Protestantism also multitudinism, more or less modified by evangelic doctrine, is the generally prevalent theory. Where Ritualism prevails, the main stress is laid upon baptism (supposed to be a regenerative rite), catechetical instruction, and confirmation, as conditions of personal salvation and of church membership. But in the Free Evangelical Churches the New Testament idea of a church as a congregation of believers unto salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ is distinctly set forth; and a credible profession of faith is the condition of membership—as we shall see in a few moments.

5. CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP IN PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

As to who shall decide upon the candidate's fitness and authorize his reception into membership, the law greatly differs in different Protestant Churches. In some, the authority rests with the diocesan bishop; in some, with the local pastor; in some, with the session of elders; in some, with the church council consisting of pastor, elders, and deacons; in some, with the assembled congregation. This diversity of administration illustrates the general character of the different ecclesiastical polities of which it forms a part—namely, the Protestant Episcopal, the Methodist Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Lutheran, the Congregational. Theoretically the diversity is as wide as can easily be imagined; but practically it is inconsiderable. It would probably be a rare

instance in which a person received into the Church under any one of these forms of administration would have been refused admission under any other.

As to the conditions of membership, taking the same five evangelical communions as examples, the similarity almost amounts to sameness. These conditions are represented by the professions and vows required at the time of reception into the Church. What are they? In the Protestant Episcopal Church, to renew the "promise and vow" made at baptism—namely, the renunciation of all sin, belief of the "Articles of the Faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed," and the obedient keeping of God's holy commandments.¹ In the Methodist Episcopal Church, to renew this same baptismal covenant, to confess Christ as the personal Saviour, to profess belief in Christian doctrine as set forth in the "Articles of Religion," to keep the "Rules" of the Church, to observe the Christian ordinances, to contribute to the support of the gospel and the benevolent enterprises of the Church, to promote "the welfare of the brethren and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom."² In the Presbyterian Church, to "receive and profess the Christian faith," to repent and "trust in the mercy of God which is in Jesus Christ," to "promise in his strength to lead a sober, righteous, and godly life," to observe the means of grace, to submit to the authority of the Church, to "continue in the peace and fellowship of the people of God."³ In the Lutheran Church, to profess the Apostles' Creed and to answer affirmatively the question: "Do you promise conscientiously to use the means of grace, to be obedient to the order and discipline of the congregation, and to be faithful members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church?"⁴ In the Congregational Church-

¹*The Book of Common Prayer*, "Order of Confirmation," "Ministration of Baptism to Such as Are of Riper Years."

²*The Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, "Reception into Full Membership."

³*The Book of Common Worship*, "Order for the Administration of Baptism to Adults and Reception to the Lord's Supper," "Order for the Confirmation of Religious Vows and Reception to the Lord's Supper."

⁴*Forms for Ministerial Acts*, "Confirmation."

es (according to the recommendation of the "Council Manual"), to profess the Apostles' Creed, and the system of truth held by the Congregational Churches, to repent of sin, to follow Christ "in all things, to walk with his disciples in love, and to live for his glory," to adopt the covenant of the Church, help to sustain all its worship and work, and to live in its fellowship."¹

But these conditions may be more briefly, and not less significantly, expressed as *the personal confession of Christ*. "Every one who shall confess me before men"—it is the man, the woman, the youth, the child described in these words of the Son of Man that is accepted for admission into the visible fellowship of his people. And the content of the Name here confessed may be taken, according to the Church's apprehension of its meaning from the beginning, as that of the authoritative Teacher, the supreme Master, the sinless Example, the atoning Saviour. To demand a truly greater confession would be impossible; yet to substitute a less would be to set aside the substance of the evangelic faith.

It is, then, with this confession on his lips that the seeker of Christian fellowship and guidance stands knocking at the door of a congregation of Christ's people.

¹*The Council Manual*, "Form for the Reception of Members."

III.

SOCIAL DEPENDENCE: DISCIPLINE.

It would be no matter of surprise if one should feel the thrill of a new gladness or the awe of a hitherto unrecognized obligation on his entrance into the congregational fellowship of the Christian life. With the realization of what this fellowship signifies there will surely come to him some such experience. For the congregation, however small or obscure, whose door is opened to receive him is included in the visible, confessing Congregation of those who have truly been gathered together in Jesus's name in all the world. If there be but two or three who meet in that Name, he who unites with them becomes a member—yes, a member of “the General Assembly and Church of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven.”¹ That is the holy communion in which he holds his membership. For as Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, greeted the Corinthian Christians as “the Church of God which is at Corinth,”² in like language may the local Christian congregation be addressed anywhere and at any time. It is not simply *a* church, but *the* Church of God—a genuine part, representing the whole.

But it is with this local congregation that the newly received communicant has immediate relationship. They receive him; and not only unto brotherly association with themselves, but unto watch-care and Christian government as well.

Admission under the *conditions of membership* is followed by the *administration of discipline*.

It is this economic regulation that here remains for us to consider. And we shall have to begin by making these several distinctions: Discipline may be either *formative* or *corrective*, and both these kinds of discipline may be either *personal* or *official*. Let us see.

¹Heb. xii. 23.

²1 Cor. i. 1.

I. FORMATIVE DISCIPLINE—PERSONAL, OFFICIAL.

The older meaning of the word (*discere, discipulus, disciplina*) is to teach, to nurture, to train, and to oversee with this educative purpose.¹ Exemplifications of it are conspicuous in the home and the school as well as in the Church. Teaching, nurturing, training—in a word, *education*—this is *formative* discipline. The young Christian, therefore, entering the communion of a true and well-directed church of Christ is admitted to the confidence and affection of fellow-disciples, to a place at the Lord's Supper, to organized opportunities of usefulness and influence—and to something more. He is admitted to a Christian watch-care that is distinctly educative.

Is discipline a forbidding word? It is a word of power. Compare an undisciplined with a disciplined eye or hand or appetite or intellect or spirit—in a word, an undisciplined with a disciplined life. It will show the difference between savagery and civilization, weakness and strength, crudity and economy; between the failure of even the well-endowed mind when it works unsteadily and unskillfully, "without a conscience or an aim," and the strong, steady step of achievement. Truly, therefore, might the ancient "Wisdom of Solomon" declare that "her [Wisdom's] true beginning is desire of discipline, and the care for discipline is love of her."

Nor should we think of the discipline of the soul in the Christian congregation as necessarily a matter of official or organized procedure. It is, first of all, not official in any sense whatever, but purely *personal*. Such, beyond doubt, is the impression that one would receive from the New Testament. Church members must always and by all means watch over and, as need may be, admonish one another, that they may both encourage the good and cure the evil.¹ They must show a spirit of mutual forbearance and forgiveness: "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" "Until seventy times seven." If one be

¹In the one instance of the use of the word in the Authorized Version of the Bible—Job xxxvi. 10—it means *instruction*.

²1 Cor. iii. 16; 1 Thess. v. 11, 14.

overtaken in a fault, his brethren are not rudely to thrust him out of the Church, but to restore him in a spirit of meekness, remembering each his own liability to the power of temptation.¹ Christians shall confess their sins one to another, and pray one for another, that they may be forgiven and made spiritually whole.² Each is to treat the rest with a genuinely Christlike kindness; that is the ideal. "Receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God."³

But formative discipline may also be *official*. It is ministered by the Church through regularly constituted Christian ordinances—through preaching, teaching, hymns, prayers, sacraments—and in pastoral care and leadership.

2. CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD— PERSONAL, OFFICIAL.

But in the case of unfaithfulness and disobedience, the neglect or violation of law, there will ensue in every well-ordered society some ministration of reproof, restraint, or penalty, which is *corrective* discipline. Makers of discord and scandal, grieving instead of serving their fellow-members of the Church,⁴ must be reformed, or, when nothing else will avail, put away.

This, too, may be *personal*, not official, action. Christian brethren are enjoined even to withdraw themselves from one who walks disorderly, that he may be made ashamed, at the same time not counting him as an enemy, but admonishing him as a brother.⁵

¹Gal. vi. 1.

²James v. 16.

³Rom. xv. 7.

"We, then, the members of this Church, do affectionately welcome you into this household of faith. We pledge to you our sympathy, our help, and our prayers that you may evermore increase in the knowledge and love of God." (Form for the Reception of Members in the Congregational Churches.)

"Brethren, I commend to your love and care these persons whom we this day recognize as members of the Church of Christ. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love." (Charge to the congregation, at the reception of members into the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.)

⁴1 Cor. v. 6, 7. ⁵2 Thess. iii. 14, 15. Cf. Didache, cc. II. 7; IV. 3; XV. 3.

Sometimes, however, special methods must be employed. So our Lord himself marked out the course to be pursued by an injured brother toward the one who has trespassed against him, and shows no repentant spirit.¹ It is evident that the case here supposed is personal rather than official. A brother has been wronged by another; he must try personally and privately to bring him to a better mind, so as not indeed to vindicate his own rights or gain some advantage for himself, but to *gain his brother*. Failing in this, he is to call for the assistance of one or two other peacemakers, and in the last resort, not sitting as a judge in his own cause, to call the whole local church to his aid. And in case of final failure it is not said that the offender shall be excommunicated, but that he shall no longer be recognized as a Christian brother by the one against whom he has sinned. Is excommunication here fairly implied? Perhaps so; but that which is explicitly enjoined is: "Let him be unto *thee* as the Gentile and the publican."²

Then, too, there will be *official* cases. For to commit a wrong against any member of a church—say to slander him or refuse him the payment of a just debt—is to wrong the church, just as to trespass upon the rights of any citizen is to trespass against the State; and it may be the duty of the church as such to take cognizance of the act. Besides there are sins—such, for example, as drunkenness, profanity, or neglect of Christian ordinances—that are not committed against any particular person, and yet, because of their general evil influence, must be dealt with by the Church. Now these strictly official cases seem also to be recognized by our Lord, and the authority to deal with them declared: "Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

¹Matt. xviii. 15-20.

²It by no means follows that the cast-off offender must be treated with unkindness or scorn. The law of Christ has no such limitation. He must still be the subject of pitying and ministering love. What was Jesus's treatment of Gentiles and publicans?

This deeply significant word of Jesus was spoken first to Simon Peter at the time of the Great Confession, when the power of binding and loosing was also called the power of the "keys."¹ It is now spoken to the Twelve,² and, as the context strongly suggests, to any true Christian congregation. Also, on the evening of the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to "the Eleven gathered together, and them that were with them," and said to these assembled disciples: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."³ Now it seems evident that this authority to declare the forgiveness or the retention of sins is the same as the authority to "bind" or "loose," or the power of the "keys." And we cannot fairly assume that it was committed only to the ten Apostles present at the time, and not also to "them that were with them." It seems to have been committed to the assembled disciples, the Christian believers gathered together in the Master's name, in the midst of whom, according to his own word of promise, he himself was standing.

Indeed, who was Simon Peter? A Christian, the first confessing Christian. And we have the best reason to believe that it was to him as such, and not as some one receiving a peculiar or priestly authority, that Jesus spoke. Who were the Apostles? Confessing Christians, the first Christian church; and it was to them likewise, as such, that this great word of our Lord was uttered. It is to the Christian congregation, or even to the individual Christian, so far as that congregation or that Christian is in the real fellowship of knowledge and holy love with Jesus Christ, that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are given.

But what are we to understand more particularly by the terms "binding" and "loosing?" They were already current in the rabbinical dialect, and in our Lord's use of them may be taken to mean, first, the interpreting of the will of God as to what acts are forbidden ("bound," or the "key" used to exclude them), and what are permitted ("loosed," or the "key" used to admit them);

¹Matt. xvi. 19. ²Matt. xviii. 18, 20. ³Cf. Luke xxiv. 13-49; John xx. 19-23.

and, secondarily, the applying of such interpretation in excluding persons from the privileges of church membership or retaining them in the enjoyment of these privileges. And as to this interpretation of moral acts and its disciplinary application Jesus teaches that, so far as an inspired Apostle or the united company of Apostles or Christian people gathered for worship and service, are God's representative, being guided by the Christ himself, who is with them and in them, their teachings and decisions will be absolutely true. What is done by them here and now will be an expression of the laws of the kingdom of heaven.

Shall we repeat this familiar bit of exegesis in a single sentence? The power of the "keys," "binding" and "loosing," the retention and the forgiveness of sins—three names for the same thing—as a Christian prerogative, is first interpretative, and secondarily disciplinary: as interpretative, it interprets and declares the conditions under which the sinner is condemned or forgiven, according to the gospel; as disciplinary, it applies this interpretation in the actual condemnation, even though it take the extreme form of expulsion of a member of the Church or in his retention in good standing in its membership. *

It may be objected that this power of the "keys" implies that the Christian congregation is infallible in judgment, which it is impossible to believe. But the answer is not difficult. The power of the "keys" implies infallibility of judgment no more than the assurance given by our Lord in immediate connection with it—"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven"—implies that these two consenting disciples on their knees are infallible in their judgment as to what petitions are in accord with the Father's will. No more than does Jesus's assertion, "He that receiveth you receiveth me,"¹ implies that his messengers are absolutely one and the same with himself. No more than the apostolic word, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, . . . and he *cannot* sin,"² implies that a child of

¹Matt. x. 40.

²1 John iii. 9.

God is wholly and necessarily a sinless being. No more than the same Apostle's assurance to the "little children" to whom he is writing, "Ye need not that any one teach you,"¹ implies that these young Christians were perfect in wisdom and in need of no instruction from any human source. So far as the two agreeing disciples "abide in Him," their prayer will be offered according to the Father's will and shall receive its answer. So far as the messenger of Christ "abides in Him," he is one in spirit and aim with the message-giver. So far as the regenerated soul "abides in Him," it will be kept from all sin. So far as spiritually minded men and women, even though they be but "little children" in Christ, "abide in Him," the tuition of the one Teacher will be theirs, and will suffice. In like manner, then, so far as a Christian congregation "abides in Him," its prohibitions and permissions will be the very words of Christ himself; so far as it is taught of the Spirit, its judgment will represent the mind of the Spirit. "*Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them.*"

Now it is chiefly with the secondary meaning of this word of Jesus that we are here concerned; not the interpretative, but the disciplinary power of the "keys." An instructive illustration of it is given in Paul's letters to the Corinthians.² Here was a case of flagrant immorality, for which expulsion from the Christian brotherhood was the penalty. The twofold object of the act of expulsion was to protect the Church from the leaven of a corrupting example, and to restore the offender. The result justified the painful procedure.³ And the Apostle's spirit of mingled wisdom, tenderness, and firmness is still to be followed as a shining example to every administrator of ecclesiastical discipline in any age.

This expulsion was the act of the entire Corinthian Church, its founder and chief pastor being present in "spirit" and directing the trial. "Do not ye [ye as well as I] judge them that are within?"⁴

¹1 John ii. 27.

²1 Cor. v.

³1 Cor. v. 6, 5. 2 Cor. ii. 6-11.

⁴1 Cor. v. 12. Cf. 2 Cor. ii. 6.

Does it follow that in all the New Testament churches the expulsion of a member was in every instance the immediate act of the assembled congregation—the pastor or pastors simply presiding at the trial? This would be too wide an inference. Indeed, such injunctions as those of the Apostle Paul to Timothy and Titus indicate a larger pastoral authority in cases of discipline than that of the mere president of a congregational meeting: “Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses;”¹ “A man that is heretical [factions] after a first and second admonition refuse.”²

There is also a different sort of corrective discipline, as set forth by Paul to the Corinthians, that should not be overlooked—that, namely, of arbitration. Suppose two brethren in Corinth to have fallen into a serious misunderstanding. One, for instance, claims the payment of a debt which the other does not acknowledge as due. What shall be done? The civil courts are open and ready to hear the cause. But the Apostle would not have it taken there. It were a shameful thing that Christians’ causes should be tried and judged before a pagan tribunal. Better to “take wrong,” better to “be defrauded.” And if there be a dispute, it should be settled within the church itself. Let an arbitrator be appointed, the wisest and most reputable in the congregation; and let his decision be accepted as final: “Is it so, that there cannot be found among you one wise man, who shall be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?”³

Now in Christendom, it is obvious, the circumstances of such a case are markedly different from those of the little Christian brotherhood in pagan Corinth; and this may call for some modification in applying the apostolic principle. But the principle itself is as true and authoritative now as then, in Christendom as in heathendom. Will not any right-minded Christians, ancient or modern, be disposed to bring their difficulty to their own brethren for settlement rather than to the civil courts?⁴

¹1 Tim. v. 19.

²Titus iii. 10.

³1 Cor. vi. 6.

⁴Cf. Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (1906). ¶¶ 302-304.

3. CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE IN POST-APOSTOLIC TIMES.

In the early Church corrective discipline was a very prominent function. Here, too, it was, first of all, not official but personal. "Let us then also pray," says Clement of Rome, "for those who have fallen into any sin, that meekness and humility may be given to them."¹ As to official discipline, almost no information has been transmitted from the sub-apostolic period.² Yet a generation or two later it may be seen in vigorous operation.³ It was felt to be an indispensable object that the peace and purity of the Church should be preserved. The Christian community must be kept from contamination by the corrupt pagan society that surrounded it, a stainless light, a salt full of savor.⁴

¹Clement continues: "Let us receive correction, beloved, on account of which no one should feel displeased. Those exhortations by which we admonish one another are both good [in themselves] and highly profitable, for they tend to unite us to the will of God." (To the Corinthians, c. 56.)

Cf. the Didache, c. 15: "And reprove one another, not in anger but in peace, as ye have it in the Gospel; but to every one that acts amiss against another, let no one speak, nor let him hear aught from you till he repent." Which, however, is not the New Testament teaching (2 Thess. iii. 14, 15).

²The following passages represent almost all the direct information on the subject:

"Submit yourselves to the presbyters, and receive correction so as to repent. . . . For it is better for you that ye should occupy a humble but honorable place in the flock of Christ, than that, being highly exalted, ye should be cast out from the hope of his people." (Clement of Rome, c. 57.)

"Who are those whom they reject and cast away? These are they who have sinned, and wish to repent. On this account they have been thrown from the tower, because they will yet be useful in the building if they repent." (Hermas, Vis. III., c. 5.)

³"For with a great gravity is the task of judging carried on among us, as befits those who feel assured that they are in the sight of God; and you have the most notable example of judgment to come when any one has sinned so grievously as to require his severance from us in prayer, in the congregation, and in all sacred intercourse. The tried men of our elders preside over us, obtaining that honor not by purchase but by established authority." (Tertullian, Apol., c. 39.)

⁴Tertullian makes discipline one strand of the threefold cord that binds the Christians of his day together: "We Christians are one body, knit together by a common religious profession, by a unity of discipline, and by the bond of a common vow." (Apology, 39.)

Cf. Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," pp. 69-72.

In the administration of discipline, so far as the records show, the sovereignty of the congregation as a whole was maintained. The proper officers must preside, but the infliction of punishment was not their act alone; it was congregational.¹

Two principal grades of ecclesiastical penalty were pronounced against offenders. The lesser excommunication was inflicted for the less heinous sins, which came to be designated as "venial." It excluded from the sight of the celebration of the Lord's Supper.²

The greater excommunication was inflicted for the more heinous sins, such as theft, blasphemy, adultery, idolatry, murder, which came to be called "mortal;" and with these were classed heresy and schism. It excluded from attendance at all church services and even from ordinary social intercourse with the faithful. On repentance, however, properly shown by prayers, tears, fasting, almsdeeds, avoidance of sins, for a reasonable length of time—one, two, six, even twenty years—the outcast might be restored to communion.³

But there was one exception. Relapse into idolatry was felt to be a sin of so great turpitude as not to be pardonable by the Church. Even though it were committed, which was likely to be the case, under stress of severe persecution, in the face of torture and death, and even though the offender should show unmistakable signs of repentance, he was no more to approach the Lord's table. He could, indeed, be received as a catechumen, but not as a communicant. God might forgive him; the Church could not.

¹Note again Tertullian, *Apology*, c. 39.

²An indication of the origin of this penalty appears as early as the *Didache* (c. 14): "If any have a quarrel with his fellow, let him not join you [in the celebration of the Lord's Supper] until they are reconciled."

³Might he be restored after a second lapse? According to some teaching of the age, he could not. "If any one is tempted by the devil, and sins after that great and holy calling in which the Lord has called his people to everlasting life, he has opportunity to repent but once. But if he should sin frequently after this, and then repent, to such a man his repentance will be of no avail; for with difficulty will he live." (*Hermas, Pastor*, "Commandments," IV., 3.)

However, this rule, too, admitted of one exception. In some churches at least it was held that if a trusted prophetic teacher, a martyr (a Christian who had suffered tortures for the faith, and had not recanted), or a confessor (a Christian who had been brought to trial but not tortured, and had proved faithful), should declare it to be God's will that the penitent be restored, this might be done. The word of the Lord, through the mouth of one thus empowered by the Spirit of truth to utter it, might open, even to the penitent idolater, the door of readmission into the Christian fold.¹

I have been speaking here of the second century and the earlier years of the third. About the middle of the third century this question of the restoration of "lapsed" Christians presented itself in an extremely acute form, especially in the city of Carthage. In fact, it here reached its culminating point, and was settled forever. It was the time of the great Decian persecution (249-251). Many Christians—perhaps more than half of the Carthaginian Church—had sought to purchase safety by dishonor. Some participated in the pagan sacrifices; some bribed the proper officials to give them a written statement to the effect that they had so participated. Their hearts had failed them; the bitterness of death was too dreadful to be voluntarily endured even for Christ's sake; and so they denied their Lord. But ere long a goodly number of these recreants heartily repented of their apostasy. What should they do to get back into the Church? In the prisons were confessors not a few, standing fast in their integrity. To these, therefore, went the penitents and begged for letters recommending their restoration to church fellowship. And

¹Some, not able to find this peace in the Church, have been used to seek it from the imprisoned martyrs. And so you ought to have it dwelling with you, and to cherish it, and to guard it, that you may be able perhaps to bestow it upon others. (Tertullian, "To the Martyrs," I.)

"They [martyrs] absolved all, but bound none." (Letter from Gaul, quoted by Eusebius, H. E., Bk. V., ii., 5. See also Bk. V., xviii., 7, in which it is scoffingly asked concerning certain pretenders, whether the "prophet" forgives the sins of the "martyr," or *vice versa*.)

some were admitted to the Lord's table on such recommendations.

But through the determined efforts of the chief ecclesiastical statesman of the age, Thascius Cæcilius Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, this practice was discontinued. The restoration of the lapsed was declared to be too serious a matter to be decided by the mere word of kind-hearted and importuned martyrs or confessors. A long and severe probation for the renewal of church membership should be required; and the office bearers were the proper persons to decide all such cases.¹

But this is nothing more than would be expected when it is remembered that the power of the office bearers, and especially of the bishops, in the churches generally, had been increasing through the years. The bishop was coming to be universally regarded as a priest, and thereby, as well as for other imaginary reasons, entitled to the exercise of absolute governing authority. Accordingly the whole matter of the restoration of excommunicated persons to membership in the Church, whatever the offense for which they had been excommunicated, fell into the hands of the priest-pastor, or bishop.

And this restoration of penitent backsliders now became a very elaborate process. It was similar to the process of reception to membership through the catechumenate, though more severe. Outcasts must do penance by abstaining from pleasant things and by doing good works, both which observances were supposed to be meritorious—chiefly by fasting and almsgiving. But, in addition to this, they must do *public* penance by appearing as distressed penitents before the congregation and making open confession of their sins. There was thus developed the system of Penitents' Stations. Penitents must occupy four stations on their

¹It was against this official as opposed to a *prophetic* absolution that Tertullian, who had become a Montanist, protested: "Exhibit therefore even now to me, apostolic sir, prophetic evidences, that I may recognize your divine virtue, and vindicate to yourself the power of remitting such mortal sins. . . . The Church, it is true, will forgive sins; but it will be the Church of the Spirit, by means of a spiritual man, not the Church which consists of a number of bishops." (Tertullian, "On Modesty," XXI.)

wav back to fellowship with their brethren in the Church. And they were divided accordingly into four classes: (1) The "mourners," who were permitted to stand just outside the church door, clad in mourning garments, but not to enter; (2) the "hearers," who might stand within, so as to hear the sermon and the Scripture reading; (3) the "kneelers," who might enter the church and take a kneeling posture; (4) the "co-standers," who might take their places standing with the rest of the congregation.'

At the end of this course of penitential observances, the returning backslider must make confession of his sin before the congregation. For as yet confession was apparently not even thought of as an auricular, or private, practice; it was public—made not in the ear of any one man, but to the whole assembly of Christ's people. Then the pastor would lay his hands on the penitent's head with a prayer for the blessing of God upon him, the congregation would greet him with the kiss of reconciliation, and he was thus restored to the communion of the Church.

4. CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES.

The next stage of development, which we are forced to characterize as a still further departure from "the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ," was in the line of multitudinism and sacerdotalism, as in the case of the conditions of membership. That is to say, when everybody was received into the Church, which now became practically indistinguishable from the world, and when unapproachably above the people rose the priest, whether bishop or presbyter, with the magical powers that had superseded the New Testament offices of ministration, the method of discipline that gradually came to be adopted was that of *private* confession and penance. By the close of the eighth century public penance had been completely discarded, except in the case of

'The observance of the Penitents' Stations, beginning in the early part of the fourth century, continued in the East for about two hundred years, and in the West perhaps twice as long. Its decline was gradual, but cannot be accurately traced. (See Smith and Cheatham's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," Art. Penitence.)

some very atrocious crime. The priest in the confessional prescribed the meritorious works to be performed or sufferings to be endured for the expiation of the sins confessed.

Fasts, alms, and *prayers* were the commonest forms of penance. As to how long the penance must be undergone, the time varied all the way from a few days to a lifetime.

Lingering a moment upon almsgiving, as one of these forms of penance, we might ask as to its effect upon the recipients. No doubt it would increase the amount of alms. But, on the other hand, it would tend to cause indifference in the mind of the giver as to whether the alms would really benefit the recipient or not. They might encourage him in habits of idleness or vice; they might pauperize him; and still the giver's object—certainly his primary object—would be accomplished all the same. Because he did not give primarily, if at all, for the sake of the poor man but for his own sake, to atone for his sins. He gave for the sake of the merit of the act itself; and so the mere giving, apart from any consideration of its effect upon the recipient, was sufficient. The tendency would certainly not be toward a wise and truly helpful administration of Christian beneficence.

I have just said that the confessional, as a method of discipline, was adopted gradually. The successive steps in its adoption were such as these: At first the penitent would come voluntarily to the priest, as a religious instructor, to learn what penance must be done in expiation of his sins. But in order to obtain this information it was necessary for him to tell what his sins were; he must needs make confession of them; and this was the origin of the *confessional*.

Now after the assigned penance had been performed, the priest would restore the penitent to the communion of the Church, and would also, laying hands upon his head, pray over him the prayer of absolution: "The Lord absolve thee."

We are to observe, then, that during this period the priest did not undertake to forgive the penitent or to assure him of God's forgiveness, just as the Church did not undertake to do it in the preceding period. He simply reconciled him to the Church,

assuring him of its forgiveness, and solemnly prayed that he might be forgiven of God.

Let us make sure that we do not blur this distinction. It is the distinction between a *crime* and a *sin*. The same act, as we know, may be both—as committed against the community a crime, as committed against God a sin. The civil community, for instance, may punish and it may also pardon the man who acts the thief—may pardon him the crime. Has the court sent him to prison? The governor, who, equally with the court, represents the community, may restore him to freedom. So likewise with the ecclesiastical community and its members. The church member, for instance, who has acted the thief is guilty of a crime against the Church; and the Church may punish him, and it may also pardon him the crime. But it cannot pardon him the sin. It may indeed declare to him the conditions of pardon, and may pray God to forgive him; but it cannot forgive the wrong which he has perpetrated against God himself.

“To whom ye forgive anything,” says the Apostle Paul, “I forgive also.”¹ But it is plain enough from the context what this forgiveness by the Corinthian Church and its chief pastor was. Not the blotting out of the expelled offender’s sin, but the forgiveness of his crime, the receiving of him back into the communion of Christ’s people from which he had been excluded.

It was thus, therefore, that the Church forgave offenders during these earlier centuries. But in the course of the Middle Age the prayer of the priest for the penitent’s pardon gave place, in the Western Church (though not in the Eastern), to the authoritative declaration of forgiveness by the priest as the representative of God himself—“*I absolve thee*.” Thus it was declared and taught that both the penitent’s relation to the Church and his relation to God were changed by the word of the priest from that of condemnation to that of forgiveness. Besides, the absolution came to be pronounced not after the penance had been done, but at the time of confession, and on condition that it should be done.²

¹2 Cor. ii. 10.

²By Leo the Great (440-460) private confession was legalized. In the

And still more, the expiatory works of penance might be done by one person for another. So the debt was paid, it mattered not by whom.¹ For have we not been bidden—such was the argument of Thomas Aquinas—to “bear one another’s burdens?”

Can there be any mistake as to the nature of the process here going on? It is one instance, among many, of the ecclesiastical corruption of Christianity. Organization, untrue to its idea and its name, instead of furnishing the religion of Jesus with *organs* for the expression of its life in the world, is found reacting upon it, oppressing it, substituting it. Confession to God, says the Scripture, is the way of salvation; and the confession of fellow-Christians one to another, with prayer for one another’s healing, is helpful to the soul. Confession to a priest, says Sacerdotalism, is the way of salvation. Accordingly, in the Church of Rome to-day confession to a priest is compulsory upon all its members, from the seven-year-old child to the sovereign pontiff in the Vatican. The usual penance is a few short prayers.²

eighth and ninth centuries it was made compulsory. In the thirteenth century the Fourth Lateran Council confirmed the practice, and ordered that private confession be made to a priest at least once a year. In this same century the form of absolution was changed from the prayer, “The Lord absolve thee,” to the authoritative declaration, “I absolve thee.” (See the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Art. Confession of Sins.)

¹“But *vicarious penance* is also found to exist, and is bought. It is undertaken—*e. g.*, by a thrall for his deceased master, after freedom has been assured him in reward for it.” (Moeller, “History of the Church, Middle Ages,” p. 219.)

²To do justice to the doctrine of the “sacrament of penance,” it must be noted (1) that contrition is required, on the part of the penitent, as well as confession and satisfaction; and (2) that while the penitent must offer satisfaction for his own sins, in addition to the atonement made for them by the Divine Saviour, that satisfaction itself is believed to be made, just as every good work is done, through Christ. “But neither is this satisfaction which we discharge for our sins so our own as not to be through Jesus Christ. . . . Thus man has not wherein to glory, but all our glorying is in Christ; in whom we live; in whom we merit; in whom we satisfy.” (Council of Trent, Sess. xiv., c. 8.)

On the other hand, the distinction between theory and practice must be noted. Practically the stress of attention is laid upon the supposed expiatory merit of the works of penance, and not upon the contrition of the

5. INDULGENCES.

Here arose the idea of "indulgences." Nor was it the growth of a night, to perish beneath the first hot sun of criticism or of Christian truth. It grew up little by little through centuries, and it has mightily persisted in the Church of Rome through centuries following.

At first an indulgence was only a commutation of penance. For example, a fast of forty days, inflicted as a penance, might be substituted if the penitent's health seemed to require it—or even if it did not—by almsgiving or perhaps by the repetition of a number of prayers. Thus the penance could be commuted, and the something else accepted in its place might be called an indulgence (*indulgentia*, a remission of taxes, a remission of punishment).

But in the course of time an indulgence came to be regarded not as a commutation of penance, which was believed to be a satisfaction for sin, removing its guilt and eternal punishment, but simply as a remission of the temporal punishment due the sin even after penance had done its work. From the proposition that the Church had power given her of God to assign penance for the expiation of sin the logical flight was made, apparently, that this same Church had power to remit, for a suitable consideration, some portion, or even the whole, of the temporal punishment which God inflicts for sin.

But this temporal punishment extends, so it was taught, into the unseen world—for the doctrine of purgatory, a place of purification from sin through suffering after the present life, was also coming into acceptance as an article of faith. Therefore the

heart or the relation of this human merit to the merit and glory of Christ. "In the theological treatment of the subject, it is true . . . the penitence of the heart and painful regret are theoretically emphasized as the necessary presupposition of their saving fruit; but the conception, which descended from the ancient Church, of penance as a satisfaction which was to be offered to the Church, and ultimately to God himself, necessarily exerted an externalizing influence. . . . Stress is laid upon the individual transgression and its expiation, but not upon the inward disposition." (Moeller, "History of the Church, Middle Ages," p. 218.)

Church claimed authority to shorten, or even wholly to remit, through indulgences, the pains of purgatory itself.

But how could the claim thus to effect and declare such a deliverance of the soul from the just judgment of God now and hereafter be explained and justified? Here the idea of "the treasure of the Church" was called for, and began to take form and appear. In the thirteenth century it was elaborated by Thomas Aquinas (1227-74), the greatest of medieval doctors of theology; and without being formulated by any ecclesiastical council, it also became an article of faith.

What, then, did it mean—this doctrine of the treasure of the Church? It meant that there was a fund of merit consisting of the merits of saints, both in this world and in heaven, who had done more good works than were necessary to procure their own salvation, the merits of the Virgin Mary, and, to supply any deficiency, the infinite merits of Christ himself. To the storehouse of this treasure the Church, in the person of her supreme pontiff, held the key.¹ The pope could apply to the souls of Roman Catholics such a portion of these merits as this or that soul might need. An indulgence, then, is "a remission in whole or in part, through the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ and his saints, of the temporal punishment due to God on account of sin, after the guilt and eternal punishment have been remitted."² But what were the conditions on which this transfer of merit might be made—in other words, on which an indulgence might be obtained? They were such, for example, as making a pilgrimage to some holy place, enlisting in a crusade, or, very commonly, giving a sum of money to some pious object.

Nor was this all. The pope claimed the power to release through indulgences souls already in purgatory. He could do

¹"The pitiless logic of Aquinas established the papal supremacy. As indulgences were extra-sacramental and no longer a matter of orders but of jurisdiction, and as the treasure required a guardian who would prevent its squandering, the pope alone was its keeper; whoever else dispensed it could only do so by delegation from him, limited as he might see fit." (Lea, "Confession and Indulgences," Vol. III., p. 37.)

²Gibbons, "The Faith of Our Fathers," p. 385.

it unconditionally, as a free gift to them, or he could do it in the customary way, which was on condition of a money payment ("alms") by some one willing thus to buy the indulgence for them.¹ For this unseen world, with its awful pains and penalties, let it be remembered, was also included in the territory and under the dominion of the pope. Who would not pay a sum of money to be saved from going there, or, if he had the heart of a human being, to save a friend who was already there and pleading for deliverance?

Indulgences were advertised or were hawked about in the streets and the country places. So much money for so much Divine remission of punishment for sin, either here or hereafter, and either for one's self or for one's friends. The sale of them was acknowledged by the Council of Trent to have been attended with grave abuses—as, for example, in the case of the monk Tetzel soliciting funds under authority of Leo X. for the completion of St. Peter's Cathedral.² But it was the abuse of an abuse, of the fearful fundamental abuse of offering the grace of God as an article of merchandise, the barest account of which one's hand hesitates, as if it were quoting blasphemy, to write down.

Here flew the electric spark that kindled into flame the Lutheran Reformation.

¹Lea, "Confession and Indulgences," Vol. III., pp. 351-354.

²The Council of Trent, in its "Decree Concerning Indulgences," giving no definition of indulgences and deciding none of the vexed questions concerning them, "condemns with anathema those who either assert that they are useless, or who deny that there is in the Church the power of granting them," and desires that in granting them "moderation be observed," and that "the abuses that have crept therein and by occasion of which the honorable name of Indulgences is blasphemed by heretics, be amended and corrected."

IV.

SOCIAL DEPENDENCE: DISCIPLINE, ORGANIZED FELLOWSHIP.

THERE was another disciplinary procedure which in certain times and places was no less familiar than fearsome. It was a procedure in which Church and State were united in inflicting punishment for offenses against religion. Such offenses were accounted crimes against the State, and dealt with accordingly. Condemned by the Church, men were fined or whipped or imprisoned or put to death for them. Especially to be noted is the law of those States which made burning alive the punishment of heretics.

This kind of discipline may be traced back to the very beginning of the alliance between Church and State. Constantine the Great announced a decree of banishment against those who refused to sign the Nicene creed, and of death against readers of the works of Arius. His successors on the imperial throne followed a similar rule of action. In our modern age also the infliction of various corporal pains and penalties for errors in religion used to be almost universally accepted as a righteous law of the Christian State. It was found in the statute books of even Protestant peoples. Nor did it appear there as a mere dead letter. Both in the New World and in the Old it was frequently and severely executed. The story of our American colonies furnishes some lamentable examples.

Not only in statute books of the Christian State, but also in the beliefs of the very best Christians, it lingered. In approval of this law such men as the saintly Bernard of Clairvaux, the spiritually charming Fénelon, and the mild, scholarly Melancthon, it must be admitted, kept company with each other and as well with the Council of Constance and the Grand Monarch of France. For the idea of religious liberty, now so familiar—and, shall we say, so world-wide in its prevalence?—had to fight its way slow-

ly, and at much cost of mental anguish and of precious blood, to enthronement in men's minds. So the ecclesiastical court of the sixteenth century, for example, not only excommunicated the condemned heretic, but also delivered him into the hands of the magistrate to be burned at the stake.

Shall we ask for the idea of so unfitting a form of punishment—the motives that disposed even good men to approve it? One motive, no doubt, was to prevent the destruction of souls by the man who with his persistent heresies would destroy them, and to terrorize any others who might be disposed to follow in his steps. Another motive was to effect and preserve, in both Church and State, an unbroken outward unity.

I. DISCIPLINE EMPHASIZED IN PROTESTANT REFORMATION, AND WHY.

But the Churches of the Reformation recognized the exercise of discipline, for the most part, in its true value and significance.¹ In some Protestant confessions of faith it is even given, together with the administration of sacraments, as one of the three marks of the true Church.² Nor is this surprising when it is remembered that the Reformation was, in spirit and aim, a reformation of morals no less truly than of religious rites and doctrines. It was against the demoralizing influence of indulgences that Luther's first heroic protest was made. And in the Roman Catholic revival that followed the reformatory movement it was not the rites or the doctrines of the Roman Church, but its discipline, that was amended.

¹"As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the Church, so does discipline form the ligaments which connect the members together to keep each in its place. Whoever, therefore, either desires the abolition of all discipline, or obstructs its restoration, whether they act from design or inadvertency, they certainly promote the entire dissolution of the Church." (Calvin, "Institutes," Bk. IV., c. xii., Sec. 1. Cf. "Westminster Confession of Faith.")

²"The marks by which the true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in the punishing of sin." ("The Belgic Confession (1561)," Art. XXIX. See also the Scotch "Confession of Faith (1560)," Art. XVIII.)

2. ILLUSTRATION FOUND IN CALVINIAN DISCIPLINE, IN INDEPENDENCY, AND IN METHODISM.

Let us take the disciplinary procedure of John Calvin, set forth in the "Institutes" and embodied, though imperfectly, in his own ecclesiastic administration, as fairly representing that of Protestantism in general. Here the course of discipline consists in, first, private admonition (unless the sin be public and notorious) by any brother Christian, but especially by the pastor and the presbyters; next, if necessary, a second admonition, in the presence of witnesses; then, if these prove unavailing, a summons before the presbyters, who constitute the tribunal of the Church, for more severe admonition; and, finally, if the offender, refusing to obey the church, persist in his wrongdoing, exclusion from membership.¹ In the case of notorious crimes recourse must be had at once to exclusion. In it all the severity of the church should be tempered with clemency; and the excommunicated member must not be given up as hopelessly lost, but won back, if possible, to the communion of Christ and his people.²

But in the application of these scriptural principles and methods in the Genevan Church, Calvin met with serious difficulty. On the whole, his undertaking failed; and one explanation, at least, of its failure may be found in that cause of demoralization which we have just now had occasion to notice—in the alliance of Church and State. The same cause has also been operative in the same direction in the various national Protestant Churches of Europe—Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican—even unto this day. Must not such a failure be inevitable, where the Christian idea of the Church as the communion of saints is exchanged for the political idea of the body politic as a church?

It was for the purpose of securing a godly discipline, which seemed impossible then, as it seems now, in the Anglican Church,

¹It will be seen that the course prescribed by our Lord for the individual Christian who has been wronged by his brother, is here adopted as the course of administration of discipline by the church. Cf. "Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (1906)," p. 130.

²"Institutes," Bk. IV., c. xii., 8.

that Separatism, or, as it was afterwards called, Independency, arose. Hence Independency would have church members walk together for mutual edification, and the church, or congregation, as a whole, to call wrongdoers to account under the method prescribed by Christ for the offended and the offending brother.¹

Methodism, which, like Independency, had its origin in the English Establishment, offers a peculiar example of church discipline in connection with Christian fellowship. It began as, in more than the ordinary sense, a *social* religious institute. Its membership, gathered in large measure from the illiterate and neglected classes of the people, and as individuals rather than as families, found a congenial church-home in the "societies." Having no regular and complete ministerial service, they were largely dependent on one another for spiritual upbuilding. In these circumstances the class meeting arose, not through design or foresight, but incidentally, as the providential supply for a manifest need. All members of a society must be enrolled as members of some class, which held weekly meetings for the interchange of religious experiences and to receive the counsels of the leader. Fellowship was organized.²

¹"The censures so appointed by Christ are admonition and excommunication; and whereas some offenses are or may be known only to some, it is appointed by Christ that those to whom they are so known do first admonish the offender in private (in public offenses where they sin, before all), and in case of non-amendment upon private admonition, the offense being related to the church, and the offender not manifesting his repentance, he is to be duly admonished in the name of Christ by the whole Church; and if this censure avail not for his repentance, then he is to be cast out by excommunication, with the consent of the Church." ("The Savoy Declaration (1658) of Church Order," Art. XIX.)

²Wesley wrote concerning the class meeting, soon after its origination in his societies: "It can scarcely be conceived what advantages have been reaped by this little prudential regulation. Many now experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to bear one another's burdens, and naturally to care for each other's welfare. And as they had daily a more intimate acquaintance, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. Upon reflection, I could not but observe, this is the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity." (Tyerman, "Life of Wesley," Vol. I., p. 379.)

These societies, moreover, were not a church but societies only, supplementing the ministrations of the Church of England. To join such a communion or to be expelled from it did not affect one's church relations. Hence special rules of conduct might be required of its members, such as could not properly be enforced as conditions of membership in a Christian church.

Regular attendance upon class meeting was a rule which thus became a condition of membership in the societies. It was felt that only thus could that holy and happy type of piety for which they had been instituted be realized. And one can hardly imagine how greater emphasis could have been laid upon the value of social dependence in religion.

But when, about half a century afterwards, first in America and then in Great Britain, the societies were organized into churches, with an ordained ministry and the regular administration of sacraments, the former conditions of membership, and along with the rest the attendance upon class-meeting, were retained.¹ Here, however, a distinctly different principle was involved, and apparently overlooked: Shall a Church of Christ cast

¹The rule as formerly laid down in the Book of Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church is as follows: "What shall be done with those members of our Church who willfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class? Let the elder, deacon, or one of the preachers visit them whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequences if they continue to neglect—namely, exclusion. If they do not amend, let him who has charge of the circuit or station bring their case before the society or a select number, before whom they shall have been cited to appear; and if they be found guilty of willful neglect by a majority of the members before whom the case is brought, let them be laid aside, and let the preacher show that they are excluded for a breach of our rules, and not for immoral conduct."

The present rule simply includes the class meeting with public worship, the prayer meeting, and other means of grace, the penalty for the willful neglect of any of which is expulsion.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the General Conference of 1866 did away with attendance upon class meeting as a condition of membership in the church.

In the British Wesleyan Church members are still required to attend class meeting as a condition of remaining in the Church. The requirement, however, is not strictly enforced; and of late years there has been a strong influence toward making attendance voluntary.

out one of her members for the neglect of any other than a Divinely instituted ordinance? shall the neglect of what has been described by its organizer himself as simply a most valuable "little prudential regulation" be taken as a sufficient cause for expulsion?¹

Nevertheless this simple "prudential regulation" proved to be singularly effective for "that which is good, unto edifying." The Christian watch-care and fellowship which it secured were of inestimable value; and where, as in the great majority of instances, it has been discontinued, no adequate substitute has yet been found.²

3. PRESENT-DAY LAXITY OF DISCIPLINE.

The well-nigh universal disciplinary tendency in the churches at the present time is toward the extreme of undue laxity. Doubtless there have been Donatists, Independents, Puritans, Methodists, and others that have held overstrict views of eccle-

¹Gregory, in his Fernley Lectures ("The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints"), argues strongly but not conclusively, I think, for the retention of the class-meeting test of membership in the Church. His position is shown in the following passage (p. 235): "It is objected that the Methodists have no right to insist upon meeting in class as a *sine qua non* of membership; Christ and his apostles did not demand meeting in class; therefore Methodism has no right to require it. With all due deference we must submit that this objection arises from a superficial view of the case. What Methodism insists on is veritable fellowship and effective oversight—*bona fide* fellowship as an institution, the fulfillment of the repeated apostolic injunctions to that effect and the imitation of the primitive Church in this practice—effective oversight, the watching for souls 'as they that must give account.' Now this, if done effectively and systematically at all, must be done by some definite arrangement or other; and the class meeting is admittedly the best way that has yet been devised."

²"Is it not clear that we profoundly need something approaching the oversight and the personal dealing of the old-time class leader? . . . We cannot go back to the class-meeting test. But we do need some substitute for it, some definition of the duties of Church membership that will make the careless, selfish, stingy man feel himself out of place in the Church, and some provision for so enforcing upon every member these conditions of his membership as shall give back to the Church once more the semblance at least of a self-respecting discipline." (*Christian Advocate* (Nashville), 1907.)

siastic discipline. But where shall we look for overstrictness now? And to assert of any church that it exercises practically no discipline upon its members, is to place it under a grievous condemnation. Because the need is unquestionable. It is not only shown in the New Testament and exemplified in the whole course of organized Christianity, but is apparent from the very idea of a social organization. For no society can be perpetuated, or even formed, without laws, which are simply uniform modes of action; and the violation of law must needs involve penalty.¹

Moreover, as in the physical realm law and penalty are of necessity physical, and in the moral world moral, so in the social world they are social. Here the transgressor breaks the ties that bind him to the society; in spirit he *puts himself out*, for "whatever a man does he does to himself." And so the outward censures which the society may visit upon him, from the slightest reproof to the extreme penalty of excision, are but the formally expressed social consequences of his personal conduct.

The need of administrative wisdom, also, is imperative. Always must it be borne in mind that a church exists for its members, and not the members for the church. Also that "in many things we all stumble." The parable of the Wheat and the Tares is our Lord's perpetual warning against such a treatment of the unworthy as shall seriously injure the faithful.

Besides, ecclesiastical censures are subject to the embarrassing limitation that it is only the open sins, which are not necessarily the worst, for which they can be inflicted. The case of the profligate is plain; the case of the often more culpable hypocrite is diffi-

¹"That the maintenance of discipline may be regarded as a thing absolutely necessary, not only for the good order of the congregation but also for its well-being and prosperity, will certainly, as a matter of principle, be contradicted by no one. Though this maintenance may be temporarily impeded, whether by or apart from the Church's own fault [through the union of Church and State, for example], its continued neglect is tantamount to a sentence of death pronounced by the congregation on itself. It cannot and must not have peace with that which is to the Church a dishonor, to the world a scandal, to the Lord a grief." (Van Oosterzee, "Pastoral Theology," English translation, p. 538.)

cult. The worldliness that takes the form of corrupting amusements is manifest; the worldliness that consists in the idolatry of money hides itself under more subtle forms. The neglect of church ordinances will not be denied; the neglect of the duties of home life will less readily be acknowledged, and less easily proved by witnesses. "Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh upon the heart." "One only is the lawgiver and judge, even He who is able to save and to destroy."

Whatever is done needs to be done in love, as a father or a mother with bleeding heart punishes the disobedient child. Very tenderly—with a true "motherly tenderness and a hatred of putting away"—is any censure to be inflicted, lest the unhappy offender "should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow," and in order that love may be his salvation. Let the law be a schoolmaster, and one with a heart in him, to lead the transgressor to Christ.

But neither wisdom nor gentleness can substitute fidelity.

And all this will the more clearly appear when it is remembered that, in the administration of discipline, which, as we have seen, is first personal and then official, the personal is the norm of the official. When the private Christian would "gain his brother" with the word of encouragement or of admonition, does it not make the impression on one's mind of reality, sincerity, strength, simple and genuine goodness? No less real, sincere, strong, and good should be the official exercise of discipline. That would be a poor ecclesiastical corporation which "had no soul." A church officer or committeeman, in whatever position, is to be a *man* officiating. Official action is personal action under supposedly needful reënforcement and limitation.

4. POSITIVE PROVISION FOR FELLOWSHIP IN THE CHURCH.

Conditions of membership and administration of discipline, then, are necessary regulations of the Church as a social and interdependent body. Nor must these be regarded as merely protective regulations. Their true intent is more positive than negative, more formative than protective. All discipline implies energy, movement, activity in its administrator. And it is never

applied to a dead thing, but to the living only, in the interest also not of destruction but of truer and more abundant life. Its object is not to repress or diminish energy, but to sanctify and direct it. So the order of the house of God, like the order of a schoolroom, is maintained not to make infants of youths or youths of young men, nor simply to punish and restrain the wrongdoer. Quite the opposite. It is for edification, character-building. Indeed, what is *law* itself? Edmund Burke has described it as "*beneficence working by rule.*" Though authority be given of the Lord to "deal sharply," it is given "for building up, and not for casting down."¹ Even the Apostle's judgment, "with the power of the Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh," whatever it may have meant for the protection of the Church, and whatever else it may or may not have meant, was intended for the offender's highest and ultimate good—"that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."²

This intention is manifestly true of all that discipline which we have already noticed as distinctly *formative*—of teaching, preaching, spiritual nurture, congregational worship, sacraments, pastoral care, and leadership. But there is a certain means of formative discipline to which, before quitting the general subject, I must also ask a moment's special attention. I mean what might be called the *special organization of fellowship*.

Will not a wise and brotherly church set a high estimate upon this type of organization? Will it not be inclined to institute meetings and services designed, more or less largely, for the promotion of the Christian social life? "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the *assembling of ourselves together*, as the manner of some is; but *exhorting one another.*"³ Were not all the meetings of the apostolic and the primitive churches of this character?

¹2 Cor. xiii. 10.

²1 Cor. v. 5.

³Heb. x. 24, 25.

"Where the members of the fellowship are all merely passive, where no one teaches or speaks or offers vocal prayer but the priest, pastor, or minister, there is no trace left of the original fellowship of Christian believers as it existed in the apostolic age." (Riggs, "Church Organization," p. 14.)

There is one perpetual and authoritative example. The Hebrew Passover was not only a memorial observance, but also an organization of religious fellowship. The gathering of families or other little groups about the table, with the various prescribed ceremonies of the feast, was both commemorative of Israel's great deliverance and immediately promotive of a sacred social communion. But "our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ." And when, the evening before his sacrificial death, the Master led his little brotherhood of disciples to the upper room, and bade them eat the bread and drink the cup together, as often as they did it, in remembrance of him, it was the Lord's institution of his own memorial Supper, and it was at the same time an organization of fellowship in his Church. Indeed, how could this truth of church fellowship be more simply and significantly enshrined than in the ever-recurring rite which we have instinctively come to call "the *communion* of the Lord's Supper?"

In fact, any gathering of Christian people, even though it be merely to transact the financial business of a church, is in a very appreciable sense contributive to fellowship. It must be so, if conducted in the spirit of the Master. But the social feature may be more or less, even much more or much less, prominent; and from this point of view Christian congregational meetings may be divided into (1) the meeting for worship and preaching, (2) the meeting for instruction, such as the Sunday school, (3) the meeting for fellowship, such as the prayer meeting and the Supper of the Lord.

So, then, it may be gladly recognized that the modern assembling of the congregation on Sunday morning for worship and the inspiration of a living message from the pulpit, or for the study of the Scriptures in the Sunday school (the Church's school of the Bible), is conducive to mutual friendship and service; that closer is fellowship in the prayer meeting, and especially in the meeting not only for prayer but also for conference, conversation, interchange of sympathy, experiences, and ideas—Christian people "exhorting one another:" that deepest and tenderest of all,

when observed according to the mind of the Master, is the communion with one another at his own table.

But the idea of positive provision for fellowship was more exclusively embodied in a certain religious feast, of both apostolic and post-apostolic times. Organizing themselves about the family idea, the churches of the New Testament held regular congregational meetings (described, at least in their abuses, in the eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians) for partaking of a meal together, in connection with which they broke the bread and drank the cup of the Lord's Supper.¹ In like manner, in the post-apostolic Church the people met together every Sunday for a meal which they called *love* (*ἀγάπη*), whence the later term *love feast*. Each, according to his ability, brought his contribution of food; each his contribution of sympathy, truth, edification. Men and women, the cultured and the rude, even master and slave, associated here as united in Christ. One and another would sing a hymn, offer a prayer, deliver a word of exhortation, expound a Scripture passage, not according to any fixed rule, but under the promptings of the heart.²

That there could be a Christian church, real and living, without some such meeting for fellowship, would probably have been an unfamiliar idea to those early centuries. On the other hand, that this fellowship should sometimes be abused only proves that Christ's people, then as now, were beset with infirmities and liable to sin.³

¹1 Pet. v. 14; 2 Pet. ii. 13; Jude 12.

²"Our feast explains itself by its name. The Greeks call it *ἀγάπη*—i. e., affection. Whatever it costs, our outlay in the name of piety is gain, since with the good things of the feast we benefit the needy. . . . The participants before reclining taste first of prayer to God. . . . They talk as those who know that the Lord is one of their auditors. After manual ablution and the bringing in of lights, each is asked to stand forth and sing, as he can, a hymn to God, either one from the holy Scripture or one of his own composing. . . . As the feast commenced with prayer, so with prayer it is closed." (Tertullian, "Apology," c. 39.)

³Smith and Cheatham's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," Art. *Agapæ*.

It was the abuses of the love feast that occasioned its discontinuance. Some time in the fourth century it was prohibited by the Council of Laodicea: "That it is not lawful to hold *Agapæ* in the Lord's houses or the churches, or to eat in the houses of God or lay couches." (Canon XXVIII.)

Why a practice so apparently nonreligious as the eating of a meal on these occasions? Because, for one thing, it was a ministration to the poor. They contributed, it is true, of their poverty, but the rich of their abundance, and it was a common table about which rich and poor assembled. "With the good things of the feast," said Tertullian, "we benefit the needy." The feast of food was a feast of beneficent and grateful love.

But also and chiefly, to break bread with another is to approach him in a distinct outward act as a friend. In the home the family meal is the regularly recurring occasion for kindly and confidential talk, the play of affection, genial courtesies, the free sharing of whatever is best in sentiment and thought. It means this no less truly than it means the supply of bodily needs. Unhuman is the solitary meal. In the West, as well as in the ancient and hospitable East, food is symbolic of friendship. Then, too, in illustration of this use of food as a sacrament of friendship was the incomparable example of Jesus. Sitting as a guest at the tables of the people, even in the home of a Pharisee¹ or a publican,² to both household and guests he broke the bread of truth and love. He ate and drank with his disciples day by day, and at the Last Supper and after the Resurrection.³ Nor shall we find any more winsome and searching communication of truth than his words at meal with his friends—the table talk of Jesus.⁴ To partake of a meal with Jesus, as so many did, and as the Twelve did so many times, was it a nonreligious experience? It was the transfiguration of bodily hunger into a means of the communion of souls. We can understand, therefore, how those who had learned of Jesus "did take their food," breaking bread in the home—probably the evening meal, and partaken of "from house to house"—"with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God;"⁵ how it seemed good to the New Testament historian Luke to record, "Upon the first day of the week, when we were

¹Luke xi. 37; vii. 36.

²Luke v. 29; xix. 5-7.

³Luke xxiv. 42; John xxi. 12, 15; Acts x. 41.

⁴Mark xiv. 3-9; Luke vii. 40-50; x. 38-42; John iv. 31-34; xiii. 6-17; xxi. 15-22.

⁵Acts ii. 46, 47.

gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them,"¹ and to tell that when Paul had "broken the bread and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed;"² and how an evening meal together might be chosen as a means of spiritual fellowship by the early Christians.

It is so now. Hence when a few Christian men and women—say, the officers and teachers of a Sunday school at a teachers' meeting—make the breaking of bread together a part of the exercises, it is both an expedient and a scriptural practice.

It is the same endeavor to direct and perpetuate the spirit of brotherhood that, in modern Christianity, has taken form in the love feast of the Moravians, and has found its most extensive distinct embodiment in the class meeting of Methodism.³

Now it is true that brotherly love cannot be mechanically regulated. A thing of the heart, it insists on finding its own means of expression. Nevertheless it may be effectively served by favoring methods and opportunities; and one of these is the organization of fellowship. If the fountain, breaking through the crust of the earth, would do its best for the world, it must create and keep a channel, and not diffuse itself aimlessly here and there. Organization provides channels for the living waters of Christian love, "where they may broadly run." Nor need any one forget that the channel is not the stream.

Prominent even in the organization of fellowship will be the idea of service; not simply of mutual helpfulness, but also of united service to others. What can be done for our homes, our church, our community, and not merely what is the Christian life to us and what are we to one another, will be chief subjects of conversation. Otherwise the spirit of love itself may weaken

¹Acts xx. 7.

²Acts xx. 11.

³"After men became Christians much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in an affectionate intercourse with one another, and correspondence with other societies. Perhaps their mode of life, in its form and habit, was not very unlike the *Unitas Fratrum* or the modern Methodists." (Paley, "Evidences of Christianity," Part I., c. 1.)

and degenerate into exclusivism. In the home life there may be a family as well as an individual selfishness. There are women who, with admirable devotion to their own households, have no heart nor hand for any larger sphere. There are men who are kind to their own kith and kin, yet not philanthropic. Similarly there is such a thing as congregational selfishness. "*Our church*" may shut out the rest of the churches and of the world.

But such is not the Christianity of Christ. The meeting for fellowship in his name will find its most healthful outcome in the fellowship of work. Suppose, for example, that the business methods of the outside community are saturated with falsehood and selfishness, and the church makes no effort to Christianize them, or that even its own members habitually practice these methods. Suppose that the prevailing conditions of community life have hardly begun to be brought under the law of Christ. Shall a church as such care for none of these things? She must care for them all. A smug little ecclesiasticism cultivating within itself the Christian social life, with no recognized mission of Christianization to the social, political, commercial, educational, and industrial relations of men—that surely does not fulfill the idea of the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the goodly fellowship of "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God."

V.

INDIVIDUALISM: PARISH, MONASTERY.

SOCIAL dependence is not to be interpreted as the destruction, or even repression, of the individual. It is not each separate soul sinking down into the social order so as to lose its personal significance or reason for existence. Only through an abuse of the principle of sociality can this occur. The right use of it will be followed by exactly the opposite effect. As in the very dawn of consciousness the child's association with other minds does not hinder, but on the contrary awakens and sustains, his sense of selfhood, so is it in youth, in the years of maturity, in old age, throughout life. To grow up into a clear and commanding consciousness of oneself as a person, one must come into acquaintanceship with other persons.

No doubt it is true, what the philosophers say, that by contact with an external world we become aware of ourselves. But it is equally true that by association with fellow-beings this awareness of ourselves is still more distinctly realized. The silent daily assertion, "I am not *you*," clears and strengthens, through contrast, the self-assertion, "I am *myself*." The individual is not meant to be overcome, but on the contrary to be stimulated, by social contact—

And grow a larger self by other selves.

In politics, therefore, when the citizen yields passively to the governing power, whatever kind of governing it does, or goes blindly with his party, whatever its policy, offering thus a belated example of the ancient political theory that the state is everything and the individual nothing, he is abusing, not properly using, his social instincts. He has his reward—the smiles of the demagogue whose purpose he serves. He must also endure his punishment—the enfeeblement of himself. In religion, likewise, when the Christian passively receives whatever is given by

his church, accepting its polity, its rites, its brotherhood, its teachings, with no reason save that of a drowsy, unreflecting submission, he also is chargeable with an abuse of the principle of sociality. He must react upon what he sees and hears before it becomes really his own. Association with Christian brethren is intended thus to guide him not away from but into the completest possible personal life.

I. INDIVIDUALIZING EFFECTS OF THE TEACHING AND THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS.

This undoubtedly is the testimony of the Gospels. For in them not only the social but also the personal element of religion is set forth in the very lime light of truth.

The transcendent personality of Jesus would quicken the personal powers of any open-hearted disciple. So with his teaching, both in spirit and form. He came to men, as a teacher, with truth and inspiration, not with intellectual fetters. He taught in parables, which had to be thought out by the learner. He gave life-breathing words, not groovelike formulas of outward conduct. He appealed to men's reason and conscience: "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"¹

And were no eye in us to tell,
Instructed by no inner sense,
The light of heaven from the dark of hell,
That light would want its evidence.

The dominant Greek and Roman thought subordinated the individual to the institution. Jesus declared: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Broadly speaking, Judaism was for the religious training of a people; Christianity for the quickening of persons into conscious sonship to God. The message of the prophets of Israel was predominantly to the nation: "O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." The ministry of Jesus was to the individual: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

¹Luke xii. 57.

He showed the priceless worth of the single soul. Wakening that consciousness of worth, and putting each man for an awful moment apart from his fellows, he bade him look up and realize that his first and deepest relationship is with the Father-God. The good Shepherd goes forth to seek any one sheep that is lost. Not even the lowliest child is despised: he is an object of Divine and angelic regard. As to his disciples, Jesus would not have them follow him with a blind, mechanical subservience, as bond servants, not knowing what their Master did. He would relate them to himself, and make them sharers of his life in the far more enlightened and personal relation of friendship. "I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you."

And the Christian consciousness—is it not, whatever else it may be, the sense of personality raised to its highest power? The Christian—by what name shall he be called? In his immediate access to God, a priest; in the royalty of his will power and character, a king; in his inmost spiritual life, a son of God. Behold the egoism of the gospel!

Inasmuch, then, as Jesus emphasizes both the social and the personal element of religion, we may infer that there is no conflict between the two. And we are prepared to learn what experience teaches—that, on the contrary, they are mutually serviceful. It is an economic writer of the present day who holds that "the more the liberty of each individual grows, the more the social activity may, and ought, to grow in its turn." Similarly the stronger the personality of the individual disciples who, gathering about the Master, compose a church, the stronger the church thus constituted. And their fraternal association, in its turn, tends not to restrain but to develop in each of them this same personality. Each for himself has to choose to do the Heavenly Father's will, and in relation to this brethren to minister rather than be ministered unto. Each for himself is to become no less aggressive than compliant. Each for himself bearing another's burden will be better prepared to bear his own. Associate life will both define and enrich individual life.

This will appear more clearly if we consider for a little while what personality is. Not that I propose to attempt a definition of it. No one has a moment's time to spend in the attempt to define an ultimate fact; and personality is an ultimate fact—incomparably the greatest that we know anything about. The "solid" earth is a trifle beside it. But perhaps we can make up something like a description of it by taking note of its most conspicuous qualities; and these are such as freedom, self-consciousness, the sense of identity, reason, will, self-possession, *moral love*.

It is this last quality with which we are here concerned. Personality involves the power not only of self-disposal in general, but of self-devotion in particular. Poor and meager must be its development under the régime of either the ancient or the modern Ishmael—his hand against every man and every man's hand against him. It is capable of acknowledging the law of love; and only under this law can it reach its highest development. Its very nature, therefore, calls for a social and not a selfish or merely individualistic life. The true life is lived, the true self found, the true personality perfected in a Christian response to the presence of fellow-beings.

It is not in the prison of selfishness—"himself," as Milton said of the voluptuary, "his own dungeon"—but out beneath the heavens of truth, in free and whole-hearted obedience to Christ-like love, the law of his nature, that a man may hope to realize in its finest expression the great master-fact of selfhood.

2. REPRESSION OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

Now in the human world, as contradistinguished from all lower spheres, interest culminates in the individual; and for the reason that here the individual is not merely a creature but a *person*. As such he is not to be used, like a plow or even like the faithful horse that draws it, in gaining some end, but is himself a true end in which other persons may rest and be satisfied. So it is not people but persons, not societies but souls, not types or classes but personal characters and careers for which we—who our-

selves are each a person, a soul, a character—chiefly care. It is not humanity but this or that man about whom we wish to hear. It is not personality, but personalities that have power over us.

The case is supposable, however, that the Church of God should so pervert its Divine idea as to become repressive of the personal quality in religion. It might come to stand for solidarity and to gain its end at the expense of individuality, which consists of one's peculiarities of intellect, temperament, or speech; or even at the expense of personality, which, according to the description of it just given, consists of the essential capacities and powers of one's being. In a word, it might create such an ecclesiastic oneness as to dishonor individualism, which may be taken as including both individuality and personality.

Not only might this be so, but it has been so. For, as a matter of fact, the Church did thus overdo the idea of solidarity in the fourth and a number of succeeding centuries. Its policy was so to impose its rites and so to exercise its authority as to bring the whole community, through external pressure rather than free, personal choice, into its membership. It laid its hand by means of baptism, which was identified with the new birth, upon every child that was born. Its public ministrations were, to a large extent, such as the unspiritual mind could receive without disturbance or offense—spectacular and priestly, not vitally moral and evangelic. Its government became autocratic and hierarchic. Through the Church's loss of spirituality, rather than through the world's regeneration, the Church and the nation, as in pagan or Mohammedan countries, became practically one. All too much were men treated as a mass of homogeneous material to be molded, through the action of ecclesiastic machinery, into a uniform religious product. They were clay for the brickmaker's hand.

But here we shall do well to pause a moment and dwell somewhat more particularly upon the causes in operation to make the Church an invader rather than a promoter of personality. In no small measure the effect was due to environment. We of the present generation are living in an age of a growing social conscience, it may be hoped, and very certainly in an age of a well-

grown individualism. We are indebted for it largely to the New Testament. The influence of Jesus, wherever it is welcomed, must produce such an effect. It has been said that the Free Churches of England are "nurseries of individualism." Whatever dangers it might involve, such likewise were the apostolic churches and their immediate successors. They took even the abject slave by the hand and lifted him up into a sense of his immortal manhood. But autocracy, imperialism, militarism, was the dominant note of the all-conquering Roman Empire, under whose sway these little Christian communities had to gain and maintain a standing ground. The common man was to be used rather than respected. The slavery of captives or men of inferior races or other useful unfortunates was to be accepted as a part of the constitution of the world. "The slave," says the most influential philosophic mind of antiquity, "is, as it were, a part of the master, as if he were an animated part of his body, though separate."¹ They are "destined by nature to slavery"—so he taught—and "there is nothing better for them to do than to obey." Modern and Western ideas of the rights of the individual human being had not yet risen above the threshold of the national consciousness. In these circumstances was it any wonder that the imperialism of the State should invade the Gentile churches?

But there was also a more powerful force in the Church's environment that wrought for the same effect. The imperial government was a pagan and sacerdotal government. Its religion was a religion of priests and sacrifices and auguries. In this religion the Gentile Christians had been born and brought up. It

¹Aristotle, "Politics," Bk. I., c. 6.

Compare this teaching about slaves with the teaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles to them (Aristotle taught nothing *to* them): "Wast thou called being a bondservant? care not for it; but if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman;" and again: "Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ." (1 Cor. vii. 21, 22; Col. iii. 23, 24.)

was intertwined with many of the dearest associations of their life. It was their inheritance through the course of generations—in the blood, in the habit of mind. No wonder, then, if they should be inclined to carry with them the idea of it and the inclination toward it, in some form or other, into the Church? At any rate, it gave signs ere long of its presence in the Church. The so-called Christian priest made his appearance. The hierarch began to put forth his claims in the household of Jesus.

And the point of significance here is that the sacerdotal idea of Christianity, whether embodied in the culmination of its power in the Church of Rome or in the somewhat milder forms of the earlier churches and of modern ritualistic communities, is no friend of individualism. Let it be successfully taught that the ministry antedates and makes the Church; that this ministry is a priesthood; that the regenerate life begins in baptism, received either in infancy or on profession of faith, and that it is nourished by bread and wine, which, through the priest's consecrating words, is changed into spiritual food; that forgiveness of sins is from the priest; that the Church, supposed to be coördinate with the Scriptures and an infallible teacher, is to take men into its membership that it may both make and keep them Christians through the administration of ordinances; let this be done, and the result will not be doubtful. A manifestly different type of Christian character will appear from that which properly results from the teaching of the New Testament. It will lack distinctness, depth, freedom, individuality, strength of personality. It will bear the watermarks of a system of spiritual oppression heavier than that from which the Jewish Christians had been rescued whom the great world-Apostle teaches and exhorts: "With freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

Thus the rising sacerdotalism of the earlier Christian centuries, so far as it had sway, added the weight of its influence to that of imperialism; and the operation of the united forces was to dispose the individual side by side with his fellows upon a certain dead level of authoritative ceremonial religion. Verily the new-

born sense of selfhood "was here, but as a child in the midst of grown-up foes."

What now shall the earnest souls do, intent upon the satisfaction of their own conscious and particular spiritual needs? Many of them, let us hope, persisted, despite unfavorable surroundings, in seeking the true knowledge of God. Many doubtless gave up the attempt and drifted with the popular tide. Some stood forth in protest as heretics or schismatics. But there was also a great multitude who, without antagonizing the Church, neither disbelieving its dogmas nor refusing its rites, simply turned away into seclusion, and formed religious communities of their own. The monastery was instituted. Montanism has been described as "a beating of the wings of pietism against the iron bars of organization." Monasticism was not a beating against the bars, but an escape on the unfolded wings of pietism to a chosen retreat.

It is with this movement that we are now chiefly to be occupied.

3. FORMATION OF THE PARISH.

It may be well, then, to take a glance at the parish church and the monastery, as they stood side by side, embodying contrasted conceptions of Christianity, through the early and the medieval centuries.

The word *parish* (in its Greek form, *παροικία*, a "sojourning," which afterwards came to mean the "sojourners" themselves) is the name which seems to have been given two thousand years ago to a community of Jews in a Gentile city. For the Jews were then, as now, a scattered nation. They were found, for example, in Ephesus or Corinth or Rome, far from the fatherland, a comparatively small community dwelling alongside the great Gentile community. Yet with these dominant Gentiles—being separated from them by religious faith and observances—they were in no close affinity. So they were called strangers, foreigners, sojourners (*παροικίαι*).

Now when the gospel was preached in such cities and the

first little Christian congregations gathered, they too were called *parokiai* (or, as we have it, *parishes*). Why so? Perhaps because, for one thing, these congregations were formed in part out of members of the Jewish population, and in some instances, as may be supposed, the synagogue itself became a Christian church. Also, we may believe, because of the nearness of these little Christian communities to, and at the same time their separateness from (*παρὰ - οἰκίῳ*), the generality of the people. It would seem still again that the idea of their being but sojourners on earth, having their real citizenship in heaven, favored this application of the term to the early Christian communities.¹

Christianity went on to overspread province after province of the Empire; and as churches were multiplied, especially in the city and its suburbs, the whole group of churches under the rule of a bishop was called a parish.² But after a time—say, by the beginning of the fourth century—this group of churches, no longer circumscribed by the city and its environs, but, extending into the country, began to be called a diocese, and the name *parish* to be restricted to the single congregation.³

At first parishes had no strict territorial limits, either in city or country; nor did they necessarily adjoin one another. But when whole peoples became (nominally) Christianized, and the organization of the Church was perfected, their entire territory (as, for instance, in England at the present day) would in the

¹ 1 Pet. i. 17.

Clement of Rome begins his Epistle to the Corinthians with the words: "The Church of God which sojourns (*ἡ παρικοῦσα*) at Rome to the Church of God sojourning (*τῇ παρικοῦσῃ*) at Corinth." (See also Polycarp, *To the Philippians*.)

² Eusebius, for example, speaks of Cyprian as "pastor of the *parish* of Carthage." (Ecc. Hist., Bk. VII., c. 3.)

³ "It [diocese] . . . signified an aggregate not merely of several districts, governed each by its own bishop, but of several provinces, each presided over by a metropolitan. The diocese itself was under an Exarch or Metropolitan. . . . About the same period the word *diocese* began also to assume the sense which has finally prevailed to the exclusion of that just mentioned, and to be used to signify a district governed by a single bishop." (Smith and Cheatham's Dictionary, Art. "Diocese.")

course of time be divided into parishes. Each of these parishes, moreover, would have its pastor or ruler ("rector"), whose administration was that of a priest—the people, on their part, being free to choose neither pastor nor place of worship.¹

Meanwhile, through all the changes of the decades and centuries, the rule of the bishops was steadily maintained.

Thus the Church was completing its organization and subjecting all classes and conditions of men to its authority. More and more it came to stand for the principle of solidarity. More and more it tended to fuse its membership into a mass, to take charge of their consciences, to offer them a uniform measure and mechanical method of religion.

We have already glanced at the effect of this procedure. About the best that can be said of it is, that the Christian people were regularly brought into contact with sacred things, their religious instincts were honored, and more or less of the law and gospel of Christ was put within their reach.

Were the people satisfied withal? For the most part, they were probably too well satisfied. But here and there in the congregation arose a cry for personal deliverance from sin and communion with the Heavenly Father which was met by the Church with no true answer.

4. RISE AND GROWTH OF THE MONASTERY.

Meanwhile the new and wonderful movement which we are now about to trace had asserted itself, and was going on unchecked, with increasing momentum, separate and apart from the general line of ecclesiastical advance. Side by side with the par-

¹"In this way the parish became a prominent element in the later organization of Christianity. The territorial idea completely ousted the original idea of a community or congregation. The members of the Church were not free to worship where they pleased, or to associate for religious purposes with whom they would. The framework was prepared for them in the parochial system. They were part of the flock not merely of one bishop, but of one presbyter. They were committed to his charge, and to no other could they properly look for teaching, for consolation, or for the sacraments." (Hatch, "Growth of Church Institutions," p. 97.)

ish arose the monastery. It was not planned for by the Church leaders, nor indeed by any one else. It was not called into existence by the bishops. It came of itself.

In a similar way independent associations, larger or smaller, well advised or ill advised, have arisen within the jurisdiction of the great religious organizations, in both ancient and modern times. Even paganism offers examples, such as the rise of Buddhism in Brahmanism and of the Greek "mysteries." In Judaism may be noted "they that feared Jehovah" and "spake one with another" in the days of the prophets,¹ and later the sects of the Essenes and of the Pharisees; and in Christianity, the Brothers of the Common Life and similar societies in the Medieval Church, Methodism in the Church of England, and organizations for the "promotion of holiness" in the present-day Methodist Churches. Radically as these movements differ in many respects, one significant feature is common to them all: they represent the striving of the individual after the satisfaction of a religious need which, in the larger organization, does not seem to him adequately provided for.

As to the monastic passion in particular, let us bear in mind that when it began to take form in the Christian Church it was by no means a new thing in the history of religion. Already had it appeared in the religion of ancient Egypt, in Brahmanism, in Buddhism, and even to a small extent in Judaism. In Brahmanism and Buddhism it had organized itself thoroughly and prominently. Indeed, it is a fundamental principle of both these faiths, with their hundreds of millions of adherents, that the whole world is but a painted show, a troublesome illusion, full of weariness and pain, from which the wise man will free himself by an ascetic discipline. This was taught as the one pathway of perfection. Monasticism, therefore, is neither a proper product nor a peculiar by-product of Christianity. It crept into the Church "through a back door," as some one has said, after its fundamental principle of asceticism had been emphatically and uni-

¹Mal. iii. 16.

versally condemned in the Catholic condemnation of Gnosticism.

The spirit of this movement in the early Church was a mixture of motives. One very prominent motive, no doubt, was the desire to find spiritual safety in solitude.¹ It was the case of a soldier willing to undergo the hardships and fatigue of the campaign, but refusing to take the risks of the battle field—ready to “endure hardness,” but not to “withstand in the evil day.” Hildebrand, one may believe, was well justified in his rebuke of the monastery, as he knew it in his own time: “Behold, those who seem to fear or to love God flee from the warfare of Christ, make secondary the salvation of their brethren, and, *loving only themselves*, seek a quiet retreat.” But no attempt to account for the free choice of the monastic life by fixing exclusive attention upon any one motive would be satisfactory. Various were the moral forces, some influential in one case and some in another, that for so many Christian generations made the haunts of asceticism successful competitors of the home, the social circle, and the parish church. What, in addition to the desire for safety, were they? The worthiest of them all was a keen sense of sinfulness.² Other motives were the dread of sensualism, the propensity to make oneself worthy of God's acceptance, weariness of the order of society, love of retirement, the desire for a vocation, the fear of public responsibility, the joy of physical danger and self-denial or on the other hand the charm of an “order of the Peaceful”

¹Montalembert, to whom monasticism is the highest Christian ideal of life, defines the monk as simply under the control of the great Christian motive of love for himself, for God, for the world: “A monk is a Christian who puts himself apart from the world, in order more surely to work out his eternal salvation. He is a man who withdraws from other men, not in hatred or contempt of them, but for the love of God and his neighbor, and to serve them so much the better, as he shall have more and more purified and regulated his soul.” (“The Monks of the West,” Vol. I., p. 166.)

²“Affrighted with my sins and the burden of my misery, I had cast in my heart and had purposed to flee to the wilderness; but Thou forbade me, and strengthened me, saying, ‘Therefore Christ died for all, that they which live may now no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them.’” (Augustine, “Confessions,” X., 70.)

in an age of bloodshed and riot, the fanatical fancy of merit in self-inflicted suffering, the vague and indefinable longing for something diviner and more deeply satisfying—

"Infinite passion and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn."

But from the standpoint of ecclesiastical polity we need note but one great motive, and that is religious individualism. Mistaken, self-centered, passionately devoted to an unchristian ideal, monasticism was nevertheless a widely extended peaceable protest of the individual against mechanical uniformity and repressive authority. The monk would fain realize himself in freedom. He would escape not only from the perilous allurements of ordinary human intercourse, but also from the oppression of an ecclesiastical Christianity. He would live his own life, seeking God in constant prayer and meditation, in the desert or the forest or the cliff side or the lonely mountain gorge.¹

5. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF MONASTICISM.

But the monk was not able very long to resist the tendency of all life toward organization. He must have an *ecclesia* even in the wilderness. How else, indeed, could he give anything like adequate recognition to the Christian law of love? And the freedom that is sought otherwise than through obedience to eternal law, is real slavery.

"Love of my kind alone can set me free;
Help me to welcome all that come to me,
Not close my doors and dream solitude liberty."

It is well-nigh inevitable, therefore, that even the religious solitaire should develop a social institution.

¹"Christianity for the masses existed as something passively accepted, and not as the expression of individual decision. . . . The Church was involved in the thousand compromises arising out of this situation. Her protest against these, or rather her protest that something more individual and more decisive could be contemplated, was embodied mainly in Monasticism." (Rainy, "The Ancient Catholic Church," p. 520.)

Three principal stages of this development may be noted: (1) the monk according to the original idea (*μόνος*, "alone"), a hermit, dwelling in his cave or hollow tree or miserable hut, with no companionship whatsoever; (2) the monk as a cœnobite, living with his brethren in a monastery, each monastery having its own government quite independent of the rest; (3) all the monasteries of the same order affiliated under a common government, moral rather than organic, with the mother monastery as its center.¹

Now the presiding officer of a monastery wielded well-nigh absolute authority; for the threefold monastic vow was poverty, chastity, and *obedience*. Where, then, it may be asked, was the freedom of the monk's life as compared with that of membership in the parish church? First of all, it must be granted that he did return to organization, and hence to authority; he had to do so; he could not continue to live so unhuman a life as that of a hermit. But, on the other hand, liberty was found in the fact that he chose the monastic life freely and deliberately, and that its companionships were congenial. Besides, the monk had a voice in the selection of his own chief; for the abbot was not appointed by the bishop, nor by any other authority, but was elected by the brothers of the monastery themselves.

But these were not the chief things. The source of monastic freedom lay deeper. It was in that religious earnestness which clears and intensifies one's sense of his own personality. The man who becomes aware of his eternal worth, notwithstanding all his unworthiness, who feels the intolerable burden of his sins and is bent on securing the salvation of his soul, cannot live any longer in the spirit of a slave to men. Standing before God he will awake to such a consciousness of selfhood as will set him free. Thus it was that the monk chose to live in a monastery and

¹"Thus arose huge organizations, which stretched their colonies across many countries, without weakening the connection between the members and the center." (Schaff-Herzog, "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," Art. "Monastery.")

obey his abbot, feeling that it was in this way he could best attain the personal end which he kept ever in view.

Nor should it be supposed that the monk, like the black-veiled nun of a later day, was prohibited from passing beyond the walls of the monastery. On occasion he would go forth to visit a city, or influence the proceedings of an ecclesiastical council (sometimes mischievously, no doubt), or attempt some other service in the wide and busy world. Even the hermits did so—as, for instance, Anthony, the father of monasticism, in his visits to Alexandria. It was through the act of an Eastern monk also—if the story be true—that the Emperor Honorius was moved to abolish the most brutalizing, yet most popular, sport of the age. For when Telemachus, in the year 404—journeying, it is said, all the way from the East for the purpose—descended into the arena of the Roman amphitheater to part the contending gladiators, and died under the stones flung from the hands of bloodthirsty spectators, that martyr death proved the effectual condemnation of the criminal entertainment against which it bore witness.

“His dream became a deed and woke the world.”

Let it stand as an example, the most promising as well as the most dramatic, of the outside work of the Christian monk in that early age.

6. REGULATION AND SUPERVISION OF THE MONASTERY.

Evidently the daily life of the monastery must be brought under some sort of systematic regulation. In point of fact this regulation became very exact and minute. In the East the rule that universally prevailed and has substantially maintained itself, at least in theory, in the Orthodox Eastern Church unto the present day is that of Basil the Great (d. 380). This Rule, notwithstanding the real greatness, moral and intellectual, of its author, was, like himself, extremely ascetic: Only one meal a day, and that consisting of bread, water, and herbs; no sleep after midnight; both day and night divided off into short, definite periods; manual labor alternating with devotional exercises.

In the East, indeed, monasticism has had practically no development since the early days. It has never given rise, as in the West, to different orders founded with different aims and for special lines of work—as, for instance, the Franciscans to care for the poor, the Dominicans to preach, the Carmelites to promote the practice of devotion to the Virgin Mary, and so on. It has ignored all knowledge and mental culture. Its chosen state is that of intellectual inertness and ignorance. When the great Greek theologian and scholar, Eugenios Bulgaris, made the effort to found a school at Mount Athos, the chief seat of Eastern monasticism, with its many monasteries and seven thousand monks, these monks angrily tore the building down, and it has not yet been rebuilt. Knowledge seems to be regarded as an element of that “evil world” from which the monk has fled for the saving of his soul.

And so likewise, one might be tempted to say, is beneficent activity set at naught. For the Eastern monks do not go forth to teach or preach or tend the sick or in any way serve their fellow-men. In the language of the historian (and eulogist) of “The Monks of the West,” “the monks of the East sank gradually into nothingness.” For all that they speak of their life as the “angelic life” and their costume as the “angelic habit,” they are by no means to be called, like the angels of heaven, “ministering spirits, sent forth to do service.”

In the West the most widely accepted Rule was that of Benedict. It, chiefly perhaps, won for its author the title, “Father of the Monks of the West.” At any rate, the founding of his monastery on Monte Casino in Southern Italy (529) and the framing of its Rule mark the beginning of effective organized monasticism in Europe.

The Rule of Benedict—which for eight centuries, through the Age of Iron, had no rival in the West—though by no means lenient, was conceived in a much milder and more reasonable spirit than that of Basil. The monastery must contain within its inclosure not only gardens but also a mill and a bakery—all

things necessary for subsistence; open-handed hospitality must be shown to strangers and the poor; the monk must own no property, not even the pen with which he did his writing; a novitiate of twelve months was required for admission into the community; daily hours of outdoor labor, in summer and winter, were assigned—doubtless, as Jerome had said to Rusticus, “not so much for the sake of the body as to save the soul;” hours of daily study must also be observed—a most fruitful provision; and a somewhat nutritious diet was prescribed.

But, on the other hand, the Rule of Benedict required the novice who applied for admission into the community to make a vow of “stability,” or perpetual residence. He must write it out with his own hand, and in the presence of his brethren lay it upon the altar. Theretofore, while the rule of “once a monk always a monk” could claim the authority of even a General Council,¹ no distinct and regular vow to observe it had been prescribed by the monasteries themselves. But Benedict would lay upon the applicant, in a form not to be misunderstood or forgotten, the obligation of irrevocable self-commitment to the monastic life.²

And it will have to be added that the inhuman custom was adopted of receiving young children into the monastery, at the request of their parents, to be trained up for monkhood.

In addition to the observance of the Rules of the Monastery, the use of certain instruments of self-torture, such as the hair shirt, the girdle and bracelets of sharp-pointed metal, and the whip, as a voluntary discipline, became a prominent feature of the monastic life in the Middle Ages. And this discipline of bodily self-torture is still commended by the Church of Rome

¹“Those who have been once received into the number of the clergy or have become monks must not serve in war or enter a secular calling; those who venture to do so, and do not repent so as to return to the calling which they had previously chosen for the sake of God, shall be anathematized.” (Council of Chalcedon, Can. 7.)

²Montalembert, “The Monks of the West,” Vol. I., pp. 338, 339.

and practiced, to a greater or less extent, both within and without its "religious" houses.¹

But it is still likely to be asked: How can it be that monasticism, with its unnatural limitations upon the personal life and its soul-benumbing routine, did not violate the principles of freedom and individualism? The unequivocal answer is, that it did violate these principles, and as a consequence wrought a pitiful impoverishment of the highest powers of its subjects. But such was not the spirit, however damaging may have been the methods, with which it began. Its initial significance was that of the individual soul choosing its own abode, its own associations, its own life—turning away from the many that it might the better regulate and exercise itself.

Monasteries multiplied by the thousand, from the shores of Palestine to the north of Scotland. Not confined to the country, their doors were opened in the heart of the city and under the shadow of cathedral churches to all who would follow what was regarded as the higher Christian life. Nor did they offer the privileges of membership to men only. Houses of nuns as well as of monks were organized.

And though the Church, in its collective capacity, did not create the monasteries, it could not ignore them. It must utilize them sympathetically and wisely for its great general purpose. By no means must it permit them to drift away from its control—as the Church of England, centuries afterwards, permitted Methodism

¹"The whip of discipline is of iron or of cords. The first sort are made of a bundle of little chains, sharp-pointed, and fastened to a chain which serves for brandishing them. The other sort consist of cords knotted and sometimes armed with iron points. The form and material are of little consequence. . . . The use of the whip of discipline is general in monasteries and religious communities, and is even more extensive than might be supposed among devotedly pious people of the world. The energy thus put forth to arm one against one's self and to tax one's self with the goad of pain, becomes an excitant of religious ardor, and by this voluntary punishment it prevents and restrains the audacity of the flesh." (Ribet, "*L'Ascétique Chrétienne*" (1905), pp. 431, 433. published under the authority and commendation of a *bref* of Pope Leo XIII.)

to drift away. As one very important matter, it must see that they observed the sacraments. For the monastery, in its inception, let it be remembered, was a lay institution; monks were, for the most part, laymen—even so powerful a leader as Benedict, for example—and felt no special dependence on the sacramental ministrations of the clergy.¹ Their own religious services, like those of the apostolic churches and the reformed churches of to-day, consisted of common prayer and praise, with the reading of the Scriptures and exhortation. At times, indeed, they would attend the parish church, and receive the “sacrament of the altar” there. But the Church waited upon its self-secluded children with a better provision: the bishop would appoint them an ordained chaplain, or would ordain one of their own number to the priesthood, so that each monastery might have the sacramental ministration within its own walls.²

In the Middle Ages what had before been the exception became the rule—monks were all received into the priesthood. So in the Roman Church the monks are still the “regular” clergy. Naturally enough also, when the monks were made priests, they began to establish churches and to take charge of them. In Germany, we are told, thousands of medieval churches were at one time under the control of monasteries. Thus the monks’ work—if not their manner of life—came to be, so far, much the same as that of the “secular” priests. Here, too, we find the same thing to be true of Roman Catholic churches of the present day—many of them have monks for their pastors.

¹“In the fourth century, the century of Athanasius and Augustine, when monasticism came to the birth, it seemed like a veritable stampede from the Catholic Church, as though that great creation of Christian energy were no better than the evil world from which escape was sought. For the thousands of men and of women also, who were then taking their flight from the world, left the Church behind them, carrying with them no bishops, making no provision for ritual or sacrament. To these things they were indifferent, if not averse.” (Allen, “Christian Institutions,” p. 139.) The whole chapter from which this passage has been taken is valuable for its account of monasticism as an individualistic movement.

²Cf. Telford, “History of Lay Preaching,” p. 40.

We are not to suppose, however, that the monastery always got on smoothly with the diocese. On the contrary, there was much friction between them.

In the East, it is true, the matter was soon adjusted. For here the monasteries were brought under the bishop's supervision and control; and, on the other hand, the large concession was granted them that none but a monk could be made a bishop. The episcopal ruler, therefore, being chosen from their own body, they seem to have rested content with episcopal rule. But in the West—to which our attention will be confined for the rest of this chapter—no such adjustment was practicable. Bishop and abbot contended over questions of jurisdiction. Some of the enactments of councils, in the effort to make peace between the two parties, were to the effect that no new monastery might be founded contrary to the bishop's will; that, although the monastery was to elect its own abbot, the bishop might depose him for cause, but must allow him the right of appeal to the archbishop or to an assembly of abbots; that the bishop should not ordain a monk without the abbot's consent, and should not forbid any of his priests or deacons to take the monastic vows. Nevertheless, whatever may have been the theory or the enactments of councils, there is evidence that the episcopal control of the monastery was chiefly nominal.

If, however, the monastery was denied the sympathy and harmonious coöperation of its diocesan bishop, it found a powerful friend and supporter in the Bishop of Rome. The pope abetted its cause in many ways. And this papal patronage may be explained in some measure by the fact that many of the popes were themselves monks—the order of Benedictines furnishing no fewer than twenty-four in eight hundred years—and that in this number were Gregory the Great, father of the medieval papacy, and Gregory the Seventh, its greatest representative. But apart from this incidental fact, one may easily recognize a strong tie of sympathy between the papal throne and the cloister. Neither was national, patriotic, deferential and peaceable toward the

state; both were cosmopolitan, world-wide, in their conceptions and aims.

Now the typical bishop was "secular;" he wished to stand well with the civil authorities; he would put forth no extreme views either of personal or of churchly authority; he would adjust the Church to the State. But the pope was not so—he would fain sit on high and rule the rulers of the nations; and the monk was a citizen of the earth, at home under any flag, under any sky; or, to speak more accurately, equally homeless everywhere. They both sought, therefore, to bring men, without respect to race or nation, absolutely under the dominion of their idea of catholic Christianity.

Accordingly, we find the pope inclining more to the cause of the monk than to that of the bishop. In the tenth century he exempted the powerful monastery of Cluny in France from all episcopal control except his own; and he did the same thing for most of the later orders—such as the Franciscans and the Dominicans—that were founded from time to time. We also see the monks, on their part, becoming the most zealous of all defenders of the papal prerogatives. It was mainly through Boniface, the English missionary monk, for illustration, not only that Germany was converted from paganism, but also that both Germany and France were Romanized. Having been made by the pope a missionary bishop, he was the first bishop that took the oath of obedience to Rome. Also, when Hildebrand undertook to enforce the rule of celibacy upon the secular priests, and bishops refused to assist, the monks used their whole influence in favor of the unchristian and heartless undertaking. Still again, at the beginning of the Reformation, it was chiefly the monks who supported the trembling papal throne.

It may be said, indeed, that papacy and monasticism arose, prevailed, and declined together.

7. MONASTIC LEARNING AND MISSIONARY ZEAL.

The two distinctive forces of the monastery in the days of its glory—say, from the sixth to the tenth century—were learning

and missionary zeal. Monks, rather than the secular clergy, were the scholars, the teachers, the writers of the time. Many a precious manuscript of biblical or classic or patristic literature did they keep safe amid the ravages of barbarism. Many a pupil of theirs became eminent as a leader in Church or State. It is not an altogether exceptional picture, for instance, that has come down to us from the eighth century, that of the venerable Bede, the most renowned scholar of Western Europe, spending his days from youth to old age in the monastery of Jarrow on the Tyne; refusing the offer of a bishopric; producing numerous commentaries, biographies, and books of science, according to the learning of his day; writing "The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation;" occupying the very last hours of a saintly and laborious life in dictating the first translation of "The Gospel According to John" into the English tongue. It represents what was going on to a less extent in many another monastic brotherhood of a barbarous and ignorant age.

Even the Franciscans, whose founder, himself almost illiterate, feared and disparaged learning as an enemy to humility of spirit, gained distinction in the thirteenth century for the establishment of schools and the development of scholarship. Roger Bacon was a Franciscan.

But the greater glory of the monastery was its missionary activity. Through the seven hundred years that elapsed from the time of Constantine's patronage of Christianity till the ecclesiastical conversion of all the prominent peoples of Europe, monasticism was the chief converting agency. Not from the cathedral but from the cloister went out the missionary to Northern Europe, in the face of incredible hardship and danger, to teach the truth of Christ, as he had been able to receive it, to pagan peoples. The lover of solitude had become a lover of souls.

Of similar missionary significance was that special development of monasticism which appeared in the thirteenth century in the rise of the preaching friars—namely, the Franciscans and the Dominicans. In one respect, Francis and Dominic imposed a stricter rule upon their followers than that of the older orders.

For while these older orders forbade their members to hold property individually, the monastery itself was bound by no vow of poverty, and, as a matter of fact, in numerous cases grew very wealthy. But the Franciscans and Dominicans were forbidden to hold property either individually or as a society; the monastery was to have no resources of its own. Yet the brothers were to lead a distinctively busy and enterprising life.

When asked whether prayer or preaching is more pleasing to God, Francis answered: "It is a hard question, but one consideration is decisive. The only Son of God came down from the bosom of the Father for the salvation of souls. We, too, must follow his pattern. We must give up our quiet and go forth to toil." Accordingly, the Franciscans might be seen traveling and preaching far and wide, and in supposed imitation of the example of the Apostles, depending for support upon the alms of the people. Clad in coarse frocks, they went gently begging their way. And that they might thus go preaching everywhere unembarrassed by ecclesiastic restrictions, they were not only entirely freed by the pope from the bishops' control, but also authorized to enter any parish with or without the consent of its priest, and teach, or say mass, or hear confessions and grant absolution. And everywhere they got a hearing; for their manner of life, so unlike that of the average parish priest, made the impression of enthusiastic devotion to the good of others.

Moreover, they fixed their homes in the cities rather than in the country. There the Franciscans built their convents—not in the secluded valley or other rural retreat, as was preferably done by the older orders, but in the midst of the people. Theirs were not the pure and peaceful surroundings of the agriculturalist—gardens, orchards, meadows, and forests: they were slum dwellers, "the Salvation Army of the thirteenth century."

Now between the first, or hermit, idea of monasticism and the last, or missionary, idea—for example, between Simon Stylites on his pillar,

Thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs. . .
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,

and Francis of Assisi proclaiming a gospel of love wherever he could find a handful of hearers—the difference is well-nigh a contrast. Here certainly was development in the right direction.

And there was at least the suggestion of a larger development. Under the influence and direction of Francis, a Second Order (namely, of nuns) arose, and then a Third Order, the Tertiaries. These were neither monks nor nuns, but men and women at home, in the common ways of life, who pledged themselves to follow Francis's Rule as to the spirit though not as to the letter. They were instructed to serve God in the home and the family as devotedly as the monk was set apart to serve in the cloister. The Third Order, no less than the First and the Second, were to offer their daily life as a service to God.

Indeed, according to Francis's latest biographer, this larger following of Tertiaries—which is reported to be showing signs of revival at the present time—represented the founder's original idea. That is to say, his idea was not so much to found an order as to extend the religion of love among the people.¹ If this be the true interpretation of Francis's mind, it marks the very farthest advance of monasticism beyond its starting point. For here is not simply the constant doing of missionary work, but essentially the same Christian perfection to be followed in all circumstances, callings, and situations of life.

8. DECLINE OF MONASTICISM.

As to the cloister itself, we are not to imagine it to have ever been a charmed inclosure which the moral abominations of the world were effectually forbidden to enter. Even in its earlier history it sometimes offered no uncongenial soil to vice and evil passions. There were disorderly monks, and monks of scandalous life. Jerome, enthusiastic promoter of the monastery as he was, tells of evil-minded monks of his early day "worming their way into favor with the rich, and pretending to fast, while they re-

¹Sabatier, "Life of St. Francis of Assisi," pp. 155, 156.

paid themselves with nightly revelry.”¹ Efforts at reform were made, especially by the monastery of Cluny, founded in the early part of the tenth century, which would seem to have been for several medieval centuries a genuine reforming agency.

But the later history of the monastic orders, without exception, was marked by gross moral deterioration. Fanaticism might have been expected to appear from the first; but it became cold-blooded and inhuman. Even the murder of Hypatia by the mad monks of Alexandria was a merciful procedure as compared with the diabolical cruelty of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, in which the Dominican friars were leading spirits and the Franciscans also sought and obtained a part.

Nor was murderous fanaticism by any means all. These same followers of Dominic and of Francis became notorious for uncleanness and rascality. They made their way into a neighborhood, a church, a home, to debauch and to rob. They were looked upon by the people with disgust mingled with dread. They became “a proverb and a byword.” Yet they could be neither avoided nor resisted; for did they not as priests hold in their hands, to wield at will, superhuman powers? Better equipped corrupters of society could not easily be imagined.

Under whatever “rule” conducted, the cloister had degenerated into a center of vice, a sorrow and loathing to all right-thinking people. And it never wholly recovered the lost ground. Still an institution of the Roman, as of the Eastern, Church, it has long since been shorn of its strength. When, only a few decades

¹Suggestive in more ways than one was such an enactment as the following, which was brought forward by the Emperor Marcian at Chalcedon in 451: “Those who lead a true and genuine monastic life shall receive due honor. As, however, some, assuming the monastic state for a pretense, confuse the affairs of Church and State, and go about in the cities indiscriminately, . . . the Synod decrees, . . . that the monks of each neighborhood and city shall be subject to the bishop, that they love quiet, and give themselves only to fasting and prayer, . . . that they do not encumber themselves with ecclesiastical affairs or take part in them except when, in case of necessity, they are required to do so by the bishop of the city.” (“Council of Chalcedon,” Can. 4.)

ago, the monasteries of Italy were suppressed by the civil government, the reigning pontiff, Pius IX.—though in an encyclical letter he had described the religious orders as “the bulwark and ornament of the Christian religion as well as of civil society”—is reported to have said: “It was the devil’s work; but the good God will turn it into a blessing, since their destruction was the only reform possible to them.”

Monasteries of the present day, generally speaking, comprise three classes of members—namely, priests, students for the priesthood, and lay brothers.

The outside work is done by the priests. They usually have, in connection with the monastery, a congregation of their own to minister to, in public and in private, just as the secular priest ministers in his parish. They may also take the places of parish priests temporarily absent from their charges, and are called upon to preach special sermons, here and there, and to hold “retreats.” A still more important service of the regular, or monastic, priest is that of a missionary. Nearly, if not quite, all monasteries, it seems, have one or more priests, probably their most effective preachers, who are often absent holding missions in different parts of the country.

As to the moral life of the monastery of to-day, such trustworthy evidence as is available seems to show it to be not of a high type, and yet by no means so low as some of its adverse critics have pictured it.

VI.

INDIVIDUALISM: THE PROTESTANT CONGREGATION.

THE stronger the personality, the stronger the possible character. The Church, therefore, in the formation of Christian character, is not to hinder but on the contrary to help the growth of personality. And in order to do this, she will have to be, in connection with all her governing and caretaking and sociality, a giver and guardian of liberty. For liberty is the very air which a person must breathe if he would be a *person* indeed. To become himself, not the replica of some greater and original picture, not the echo of some living voice, he must be free, standing strong in his own will and individuality.

The school-teacher finds it so, and feels himself amply rewarded when he can educate the pupil to regulate his conduct by principles of his own rather than by fear of the master or the rules of the school. When John Wesley's famous Kingswood School required that the boys should spend their whole time, by day and night, in the presence of a master, it was attempting to purchase protection against youthful vices at the cost of the repression rather than the guidance of personality. True, it is a painfully difficult problem to determine just how much to trust the young and immature without immediate personal supervision; but assuredly it is a mistake not to trust them at all. One must gradually learn to walk alone, even at the cost of an occasional fall. And the teacher has no greater joy than to become useless to the pupil. Or take the case of the parent. He finds it wise to permit the child to do many things of himself and in his own way, rather than take them out of his hand and continually bid him: "Do it thus, as I do." The civil government, likewise, succeeds in building up the finest citizenship only through the practice of democratic principles. The Church, therefore, in its

sphere, as a guide and mother of souls, was not likely to find it otherwise.

But, as we have seen, the method of the Church, listening as she did to other voices than those of Jesus and his Apostles, became in great measure unfavorable to the spiritual freedom and individualism of the soul. It was against her barren or oppressive ecclesiasticism that the Christian monk, not directly but indirectly, not with his lips but with his life, protested. For its assertion, then, of personal spiritual powers in an age of civil and ecclesiastic imperialism, as well as for its testimony to the worth of the lowest-born man in the later age of feudalism, and for many useful and beneficent works, Christian monasticism may claim the grateful recognition of the world.

But its abounding evils were inevitable. They were the proper fruits of its misconception of the Christian gospel. For it knew not the mind of the Son of Man. Setting itself against the common sympathies of humanity, despising the Divine institution of the family, bidding men run away from the moral dangers and perplexing problems of society, instead of facing them with a strong and patient spirit in the name of the living God, it was foredoomed to failure.

I. THE REFORMATION PROTEST AGAINST INVASION OF PERSONALITY.

But a direct and far more formidable protest, which for many a year had been gathering unconscious strength, found eventually a compelling voice. For religion was not dead. Christianity had not withered down into a sapless root. There was deep mystic piety here and there. Strong demands for a moral reformation of the Church had been made, in various forms, again and again. These demands were lightly or scornfully disregarded by the hierarchy till at last reformation in both doctrine and morals broke forth as revolution.

Whatever true individualism was embodied, either in the earlier or the later forms of monasticism, now appeared, free from ascetic observances, in the churches of Protestantism. For the

Protestant Christian asserted independence not by flight but by resistance. He won his peace with a sword. He threw off the spiritual despotism of the Church, denying the false assumptions of pope and council.¹ Not merely instituting, like the monk, a homiletic worship of his own apart from the services of the parish church, he rejected these services. Not divesting himself of the common human instincts and relationships in order to care for his own soul, he attempted the higher task of building up a Christian character with the aid of these instincts and relationships. Rejecting self-effacement, he made choice of self-control. Earnestly desiring to be a spiritual freeman, he would fain find his freedom in taking the everyday world as it was and trying to make it somewhat better. Such was the ideal and the endeavor.

Hence the Protestant churches were not organized in some chosen place of retreat, but, like the existing parish churches, in the midst of society. Not the secluding convent wall, but the lampstand, bearing the lighted lamp, may be taken as their symbol. And we are reminded that the same was a New Testament symbol of the churches.

It is not surprising, therefore, that, while individualism did find something of a nursery in monasticism at its best estate, Protestantism has been its training school and the modern world its field of action.

Nor can it be regarded as an accidental or unmeaning circumstance that the leader of the Reformation should have come out

¹"It [the Reformation] was in its essence the assertion of the principle of individuality—that is to say, of true spiritual freedom. Hitherto the personal consciousness had been a faint and broken reflection of the universal; obedience had been held the first of religious duties; truth had been conceived as something external and positive, which the priesthood, who were its stewards, were to communicate to the passive layman, and whose saving virtue lay not in being felt and known by him to be the truth, but in a purely formal and unreasoning acceptance. . . . It was proclaimed that the individual spirit, while it continued to mirror itself in the world-spirit, had nevertheless an independent existence as a center of self-issuing force, and was to be in all things active rather than passive." (Bryce, "The Holy Roman Empire," pp. 328, 329.)

of a monastery. Note the representative character of Martin Luther's personal experience and course of action. When the talented young student, looking forward to the profession of law, became anxiously concerned about his spiritual welfare, the course which seemed to him most truly Christian was to assume the monastic vows. Therein was the way to the "religious" life. He would spend his time in prayer and study, practicing divers austerities, doing many good works, and thus working out his salvation. But having found the Bible and made it his companion and guide, he disqualified himself thereby for conventual restrictions. The Bible opened to him a higher path of life which he must needs pursue.

At first there was no thought of opposing the theology of the Church. His own theology was the outgrowth of personal experience. He had received the peace of forgiveness as the free gift of God in Jesus Christ before ever his voice was lifted up against the dogma of the merit of good works. But at all hazards he must be true to his convictions. So therefore the great individualist, delivered through the gospel of justification by faith alike from priestly domination and from self-imposed ascetic observances, went forth to lead all like-minded souls into the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.

It was the history in miniature of an age-long religious movement. For generation after generation the more earnest spirits had sought to realize the true Christian life in monastic seclusion. Now through the open Bible they would find it, without either priest or cloister, in immediate access to God in Christ and in the brotherhood of those to whom his truth had been a word of release to souls "bound in affliction and iron." Luther was a figure of both the historic failure and success of monasticism.

And when the "poor little monk" stood before the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, at the Diet of Worms, the historic scene which that august assembly witnessed was solidarity and individualism, authority and liberty, ecclesiasticism and the religion of Jesus, face to face, in tremendous conflict.

2. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC REACTION.

Christian individualism won the day. But the victory was not complete, and there was a sharp reaction. All were not prepared to follow the freedom of conscience and the right of private judgment. In truth it is not likely in any age to be an alluring pathway. On the contrary, it is often steep and irksome. It is an ascent to greatness of personality, where ascending is climbing. To think is a difficult operation of the mind. To judge and decide and act for one's self, day by day, is not in the majority of cases to take the line of least resistance. It demands a more strenuous exertion of one's powers than to follow a prescribed routine. Thus it comes to pass that the slave of a kindly master may find himself in love with his chains. The emancipated Hebrews, rather than retain the gift of freedom with its attendant hardships, hunger and war, were fain to retrace their steps, if it might be made possible, to the land of the brickyard and the taskmaster. The converted Galatians, used to the spiritual inertness of the old legalism, were ready to entangle themselves again with the yoke of bondage. Similarly among the sympathizers with the great forward movement of the Church in the sixteenth century toward "the freedom of a Christian man," there were those who lapsed into the old passivity and submission. The magic of absolutism bore them down.

Besides, not a few of those who did maintain the claim of freedom of conscience and the right of private judgment abused their freedom by violent contentions and party spirit. Conservative minds, therefore, seeing the dangers threatening the way of the Reformers, were repelled. They feared a disastrous breaking up of the social order in both Church and State. Thus it was that Protestantism suffered a serious check; and Romanism, not yielding an inch of ground to the Reformers' demands in either theology or ritual, defined its dogmas and fixed its organization by the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, more precisely than this had ever before been done.

But the extremest form of reaction, and at the same time a

leading agency in the general reactionary movement, was that of a certain religious society organized under monastic vows. A brave and romantic Spanish soldier, Ignatius Loyola, severely wounded in battle, resolved while lying on his bed of pain and reading the "Lives of the Saints" in the castle of his forefathers, to turn away from all worldly pursuits and spend the remainder of his days as a knight of religion. The soldier of Spain, forming his imagination with stories of medieval chivalry, ambitious of knightly achievements, began to turn all the ardent devotion of his nature toward the career of a soldier of the Church. He went into retirement; instituted a severe ascetic drill of "Spiritual Exercises;" made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; studied theology for seven years in the University of Paris; gathered about him, through his intense yet regulated enthusiasm, his knowledge of the human heart, and his power of command, a little circle of companions or followers; together with them took the vows of poverty and chastity; and on a visit to Rome secured the formal authorization of his proposed society in a bull of Pius III. (September 27, 1540). "To those," he said, "who ask what we are, we will reply, We are the soldiers of the Holy Church, and we form 'The Society of Jesus.'" Such was the origin of Jesuitism.¹

The Society is under the government of a General whose power is autocratic. He is elected by delegates convened in the city of Rome from the provinces throughout the world. He appoints the subordinate officers, decides upon the admission of candidates for membership, dispenses with the observance of rules, requires obedience without murmur, argument, or hesi-

¹"In forming a judgment upon the fourth vow [see page 96] of the Jesuits, and generally upon many other points peculiar to the society, it will be well to bear in mind that the primary aim of their founders was to assume an attitude in every way opposed to whatever was Protestant. Protestants assailed the Center of Unity, and aimed at destroying the papacy. The Jesuits on this very account bound themselves indissolubly to the Holy See. Protestants enlarged the bounds of liberty till it became license; the Jesuits bound themselves by their Rule to unconditional obedience, even sacrificing their individual wills to the interests of the Society." (Alzog, "Universal Church History [Roman Catholic]," Vol. III., p. 380.)

tation, on the part of his subjects, in any command that he may issue. He is served by a cabinet of assistants.

The territory of the Society is divided into provinces, over each of which is appointed a Provincial, and under these are the Superiors of the local establishments. The General's residence is in Rome, where he receives regular reports from his subordinates, and whence he issues his commands to the ends of the earth—wielding the Society as "a sword whose hilt is in Rome and whose point is everywhere."

Admission to the Society is by way of a novitiate of two years. Through a course of prescribed daily exercises the will of the novitiate is, to be broken, so that he shall no longer think or act for himself, but only as a piece of the ecclesiastic machinery. Having completed his novitiate and taken the oaths of poverty, chastity, and obedience, he becomes a Scholastic, and passes through several years of study; then through a second novitiate, of one year's length; then (unless he become a Lay Brother) he is ordained to the priesthood, and made either a Spiritual Coadjutor or a Professed; if a Coadjutor, he will devote himself to teaching or pastoral work, and if a Professed, he will take as a *fourth vow* readiness to go as a missionary to any part of the world at the command of the pope.

The Professed are relatively few in number, but great in power; for not only do they compose the Congregation, by which the General is elected, but it is also out of their number that the General, the Assistants, and the Provincials are selected.¹

In choosing members for the order, mental ability and social accomplishments are highly regarded. It was alert, skillful, intelligent workers that Loyola wanted, not weaklings or recluses.

But they must think as they were bidden, or not at all. "The sacrifice of the intellect" seems to have been even a favorite phrase among them. Let the rational soul be discrowned for the love of Rome. All powers, gifts, aptitudes, experiences, and accomplishments must be used in accordance with the will of the superior. This was the vow that was emphasized above all others—blindfold obedience.

Does this vow bind the Jesuits to obey the command to commit an act which their own consciences condemn as criminal or sinful? It is not so written in their Constitutions. But it is written there that they "should permit themselves to be moved and directed by Divine Providence through their superiors, just

¹Alzog, "Universal Church History," Vol. III., p. 377-380; Häusser, "The Period of the Reformation" (1885), pp. 265-273.

as if they were a dead body; or as an old man's staff, which serves him who holds it in his hand wherever and in whatever thing he wishes to use it." Loyola also gave this rule for the guidance of his disciples: "When it seems to me that I am commanded by my superior to do a thing that my conscience revolts against as sinful, and my superior judges otherwise, it is my duty to yield my doubts to him unless I am otherwise restrained by evident reasons." That the practical outcome of such instructions should commonly, if not invariably, be the surrender of the conscience within to the powerful personal authority without, is what might be very reasonably expected.¹ Conscience cannot survive the destruction of personality. A condition of its healthful activity is free individual choice in harmony with its own inner and divine commands.

Accordingly it is a strangely mixed scene which the history of the Jesuit-idea has disclosed. We see the followers of Loyola going forth in all the world, on any service however perilous or painful, among heretics or heathens, perishing of hardship or disease, tortured to death by savages, giving themselves up to live or die in absolute, unquestioning devotion to their idea and their chief. We see them winning as father confessors the favor of princes, admired and sought after as educators of youth, attaining in some instances to high scholarship in mathematics and antiquarian literary research; gaining control of great universities; exercising a predominant influence in the Council of Trent, which defined the doctrines of the Church, and in the Vatican Council, which declared the infallibility of the pope; stemming the tide of Protestantism, and even leading back to the Church

¹"What the obedience of a Jesuit especially should be to the Church of Rome may apply also to his obedience to the superior of his order. In the 'Spiritual Exercises' Loyola lays down the proposition: 'That we may be entirely of the same mind with the Church, if she have defined anything to be black which may appear to our minds to be white, we ought to believe it to be as she has pronounced it.' Under these circumstances it would be manifestly impossible to see anything to be sinful or wrong in what is commanded, no matter what the command may be." (Walsh, "The Jesuits in Great Britain," p. 297.)

of Rome countries—such, for example, as Belgium and Southern Germany—in which its supremacy had been broken.

At the present time they seem to be the power behind Syllabus, Encyclical, and allocutions of Pius X. for the crushing of Modernism. They have indeed been “the thundering legion” of the papal army. “It was an evil day for new-born Protestantism,” says the historian of the Jesuits in North America, “when a French artilleryman fired the shot that struck down Ignatius Loyola in the breach of Pampeluna.”¹

On the other hand, by reason of their deliberate and shameless intrigues, equivocations, peculations, conspiracies, and crimes, we see them banished from the various countries of Europe (even from the land of the Spanish Inquisition), their organization dissolved by a papal decree for a period of forty-one years (1773-1814),² and their name (taken as it is from that holy Name which is above all others) passing into men’s ordinary speech as a synonym of the most detestable trickery and conscienceless propagandism.

3. FALSE SECURITY AGAINST THE DANGERS OF INDIVIDUALISM.

It is still the law of Roman Catholicism that the hierarchy shall order all things for the laity, whose part is to receive and obey. “When the mother stretches forth her hand,” says Archbishop Gibbons, “the child follows unhesitatingly. The Christian should have for his spiritual Mother all the simplicity, all the credulity, I might say, of a child, guided by the instincts of faith.”³ The child will believe anything his mother, no matter how ignorant or superstitious, may tell him; and such is the “credulity” which the Christian must show toward the Church. Does he sometimes hear another voice, bidding him be indeed a very babe

¹Parkman, “Jesuits in North America,” p. 8.

²“Since its restoration, it has been banished for a longer or shorter time from Italy, Spain, France, Russia, Switzerland, Belgium, Bavaria, Austria, the German Empire, and various Roman Catholic States of America.” (Sheldon, “Church History,” Vol. III., p. 411.)

³“The Faith of Our Fathers” (1904), p. 73.

“in malice” though not “in mind”—“but in mind, be men?”¹ Does he begin to think for himself about the revealed will of his heavenly Father? Forthwith not the guidance and admonition of an enlightened mother, but the terrors of an august personalized superstition are directed against him. They waken his fears and cripple his will.

Let a man believe his personal salvation to be in the hands of a certain other man, and his spiritual subjection to that fellow-man is complete. Let a whole nation or millions of people throughout the world believe in the reality of the pope’s anathema, and how many will have the hardihood to oppose his decrees in either doctrine or conduct? Fines and prisons and scaffolds are not to be taken account of in comparison with the supernatural terrors that are wielded, professedly, by the hierarchy of Rome. The free spirit cannot breathe beneath their weight.

The internal government of the hierarchy itself is, in its turn, a system of absolutism. The faithful priest is not to think and act for himself in the name of the one Lord Jesus Christ. For him, as for the laity, there is an ecclesiastic “keeper of the conscience” and of the reason. As in an army, enforced uniformity represses individual initiative and freedom.

Now that individualism has its own dangers, there can be no doubt whatsoever. But the true security against them is not to strike down the individual. One’s feet sometimes stumble or go astray; therefore let them be cut off? Individuality means initiative, and initiative—somewhat like “variation” in the animal world—means progress. To deny liberty to reason and conscience, then, is to put an arrest upon the progress of the soul. Indeed, it is to assail essential elements of personality. Is it done in the interest of faith? Such a faith is not fixed upon the God of the reason and the conscience. It distrusts him. Says Cardinal Newman, toward the close of his *Apologia*, speaking of the time when he found an end to the trials of his mind by submission to Rome: “Since the time that I became a Catholic, . . .

¹1 Cor. xiv. 20.

I have been in perfect peace and contentment. I have never had a doubt." Nor will any other man who makes that sacrifice which is perhaps the easiest of all to most men, "the sacrifice of the intellect" in matters of religion.¹

But the peace that comes thus—that comes through the substitution of authority for truth, and the cessation of rational and reverent thought—is too dearly bought. There is a pathetic calm on the face of the dead.

4. THE PROTESTANT SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

Freedom and authority, liberty of the spirit and rational outward order, are not contradictory principles. But they are opposites. And the question which has been laid upon the heart of organized Christianity is, how to maintain the divine harmony of these two principles, so that each shall help, not hinder, the other.

Protestantism, in making its answer to the question, calls for a large measure of liberty in thought and action. It is more a quickening than a leveling force.² It accentuates unity of faith rather than theological uniformity. Men have found themselves able to follow, in the same spirit of faith and obedience, the same Divine Christ, and yet to differ widely in opinion as to Christian ordinances, ecclesiastic economy, and sundry points of theology.

¹It was another noted convert to Rome who made a similar assertion as to the absence of even a momentary shadow of doubt after his submission to what he accepted as "the one only Catholic and Roman Church:" "I could as soon believe that two and two made five as that the Catholic faith is false." The explanation (assuming no extravagance in the assertion) would seem to be purely psychological and not extremely difficult. When a woman of more than ordinary intelligence, who had recently professed Romanism, was asked how she could reconcile her mind to certain irrational dogmas, she replied: "I do not exercise my mind upon them; I suspend my reason on all questions on which the Church has pronounced its decision."

²"If you legislate too much, you may so weaken individual responsibility as to do more harm than good. Once let the idea go forth that it is the duty of the State to take care of everybody, and everybody will cease to take care of himself." (Hadley, "Railroad Transportation," p. 49.) Is not the case of the Church and her children essentially the same?

They have claimed the right to differ thus, and to embody their differences in separate organizations. So the Lutheran, the Reformed, the Anglican, the Free, and many other churches have taken form and appeared. In them all, in all the "variations of Protestantism"—which, in a general way, were foretokened by the various orders of medieval monasticism—a true principle of individualism has been more or less fittingly illustrated.

It would be going much too far, however, to say that the Protestant churches have always solved this question of authority and freedom rightly, either in theory or in practice. At times—especially in the earlier periods of their history—they have taken over and attempted to perpetuate, under other forms, the governmental idea of the Church of Rome. They have degraded authority into intolerance. They have misused discipline to the hurt of personality. Presbyter has played priest.

Also, the new-found liberty of Protestantism, by a not unnatural recoil, sometimes ran into a certain sort of unsocial license.¹ In our own time and in all times, indeed, individualism has not infrequently been distorted into egotism and social indifference. Individuality may do scant justice to interdependence. Personality may be perverted into a justification of schism and sectarianism. It has been too often forgotten that independency without vital fellowship is a false individualism. Hence

¹"Man was, as it were, ushered [by the Reformation] straight into the presence of his Creator, with no human intermediary; and now for the first time large numbers of rude and uncultured people yearned toward the mysteries of absolute spiritual freedom. The isolation of each person's religious responsibility from that of his fellow, rightly understood, was a necessary condition of the highest spiritual progress. But the notion was new to the world, it was bare and naked, not yet overgrown with pleasant instincts; and even in kindly natures individuality showed itself with a hard sharpness of outline, while the coarser natures became self-conscious and egotistic. . . . Individualism had to be purified and softened by much tribulation; it had to become less self-assertive without becoming weaker, before new instincts could grow up around it to revive in a higher form what was most beautiful and most solid in the old collective tendencies." (Marshall, "Principles of Economics," pp. 36, 37.)

too many and far too unfriendly have been the divisions of Protestantism.

Both these errors have often been found and exposed in that stalwart type of the Protestant development of individualism, the Puritan. But it is only fair that we should remember that here they are the errors of an essentially strong, courageous, devout, and conscientious character. The Puritan would not drift with the tide. He would not lose himself in the mass. He would not have his conscience toned down into silence by the maxims or fashions or rewards of worldly society. Why? Because in the whole of life he was conscious of his own proper personal relation to God. Hence his passionate and persistent contention for religious liberty. Hence the touch of sublimity upon his character. Hence his powerful and productive personality. Not unfitting does it seem that both the world's great Christian epic and the world's great allegory of the individual Christian's life should have risen out of Puritanism: one the "precious life-blood" of a refined and cultured yet lonely spirit who was, "before all things else, a prophet of individual freedom in thought;" the other, the self-expression of an unschooled villager, tender-hearted but with a face like flint against the enemies of the soul—a prisoner for conscience' sake, who through long years of bitter persecution ceased not to tell the things which he had heard and seen in the freedom of the King's highway.

Now that Protestantism should not always have kept itself free from the damaging errors of intolerance or social indifference is not due to any inherent weakness in its main creative idea as shown in the life and teaching of Luther. That idea has increasingly approved itself to be of the very substance of Christianity.

It embodies a truth and a method. The truth is that of the peace of forgiveness, inward righteousness, Divine acceptance, through immediate access to God in Jesus Christ—justification by faith. The method is that of *personal experience*. The soul is actually to find this deliverance from sin and peace of conscience for itself. The true Christian, says Luther, can say: "I am a

child of God through Christ, who is my justification." The mediation of the priest being therefore no longer needed, the soul's enslavement to him is broken. His teaching and authority must be in accord with the primal sources of Christian knowledge—namely, the Holy Scriptures—which is the same thing as saying that as a priest he goes out of existence. And the gospel is known as the Word of God by that experience of justification and sonship to God which, through its instrumentality, arises in the heart of the believer.¹ Thus, moreover, the freedom which it offers is not that of lawlessness nor of indifference, but the freedom of the law of love.

Now Luther, notwithstanding his strong and incisive thinking, was far, temperamentally, from being a philosopher. His temperament was passionate, not patiently reflective. He was ill able to endure suspense of judgment, even on the most difficult questions. "I never work better," he declares, "than when I am inspired by anger." Nevertheless the method by which he proved the great central truth of the Christian life was the same as that which was afterwards followed by the father of modern philosophy. For when Descartes started out as an original investigator, turning aside from all book learning, and making an honest effort to rid himself of prejudice and prepossession, he determined to dismiss from his mind every idea about which there could be any doubt whatever. He even went further, and dismissed mathematical ideas. One after another, everything which he had hitherto taken as true must go, until at last he was forced

¹Note the significant difference in the grounds on which Luther and his master in theology, Augustine, were convinced of the truth of the gospel. "For my part," says Augustine, "I should not believe the gospel except as moved by the authority of the Church." ("Against the Epistle of Manichæus," c. 5.)

Along the same line of personal experience as Luther's is the Westminster Confession, I. v.: "We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; . . . yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts."

to admit: "My doing all this, my thinking, is a fact of which it is impossible to entertain a doubt; I am conscious of myself thinking." It was the method of experience.¹

Here certainly is agreement, manifest as well as real, between the way of the evangelic teacher and the way of the philosopher. And as a matter of fact, theologian and philosopher, Luther and Descartes, have wrought side by side in the modern world, wittingly or unwittingly, for the recognition and growth of personality.²

5. PROTESTANT AUTHORITY IN TEACHING, IN GOVERNMENT.

Nor can it be shown that the Protestant congregation, open to these influences, appreciating the testimony of experience, according due honor to the personality and individuality of its members, is, on the other hand, unappreciative of authority.

Is it a question of authority in teaching? Such are the limitations of life that the largest part of one's knowledge, which gives direction to the largest part—shall we say?—of one's actions, comes to him through the medium of authority. What do most men, learned or otherwise, know of geography or history or science, or the news of the day, through their own personal ob-

¹Nor is it easy to see how this experiential method can ever be set aside. "Of course many questions may be asked respecting the self which we are not able to answer; but the self itself, as the subject of the mental life and knowing and experiencing itself as living, and as one and the same throughout its changing experiences, is the surest item of knowledge we possess. . . . For we must never forget that experience itself, with ourselves as its subjects, is the primary fact. . . . Nothing whatever can be affirmed which does not stand in articulate rational relation to the world of experience." (Bowne, "Personalism," pp. 88, 89, 94.) Here begins all philosophic thinking in theology as elsewhere.

²"Leibnitz and Kant, Hegel and Lotze, and many others in philosophy, even Goethe in the realm of purely human culture, are alike disciples of the Monk of Wittenberg. The principle of modern philosophy, that the world of event or thought or experience must be brought to a focus in the individual consciousness, is, after all, but the confirmation of Luther's struggle in his cell at Erfurt, when we wrestled with Medieval discipline, and demonstrated its inadequacy as the method for training the human soul." (Allen, "Christian Institutions," p. 431.)

servation? They must receive all this knowledge from those who have been better able to learn it, or else they must be content with ignorance. So likewise with the knowledge of the Scriptures and theological truths. We must accept the interpretations of those who have the ability and the opportunity to acquire such knowledge, as we have not. How could the religious education of a child, for example, be possible at all on any other principle? It may readily be granted that all authority must rest on truth; but it is equally clear that much truth must be received as resting, first of all, on authority. Nor is it irrational to receive it thus.

There is, however, evidently enough to the modern mind, another side to the question. Mere authority, it is clearly seen, cannot compel the belief of any proposition. Reason can, but reason only. A bludgeon is a sorry substitute for an argument. The most it can do is to command silence—to “make a desert and call it peace.” A man, then, amenable in his thinking to reason only has a right to make researches of his own into history, science, any department of knowledge, and to form his independent opinion. It would, of course, be folly for him to attempt this without proper qualifications; but he may not be forbidden to do it at all. And religious knowledge is here no exception. Let the Christian judge, as he may be able, for example, whether an interpretation of Scripture be in accordance with the mind of Christ. Let him read for information and guidance what his judgment may approve, his conscience bearing witness “in the Holy Spirit,” with no Congregation of the Index or papal allocation to take the book out of his hand. This is the Protestant’s claim to the right of private judgment in religion.

Or is it a question of authority in government? The Protestant congregation holds that government is an ordinance of God, and obedience to those who rule a Christian duty. In a true sense, kings reign by divine right, just as do presidents of republics. The regularly constituted authorities of a church are to be obeyed. But the right of the private Christian to a part in the government of the Church is recognized, and the distinction between

ecclesiastic authority and ecclesiastic tyranny, between organized Christianity and organized sacerdotalism, is not ignored.

More specifically, a Protestant church will indeed set forth its creed, either unwritten or, as in almost every case, distinctly formulated. Both as a witnessing and a working body, it must have some such statement of the Christian faith to offer. Its appointed teachers are to teach in essential accord with the truth as thus set forth. Its members are to make confession of Jesus Christ as the Divine Lord and Saviour, and not to inveigh against the faith and order of the church. But either teacher or private member may freely pass into the membership of another evangelical communion; and if any turn away utterly from the faith of the Church, the prayer that follows him is not an anathema. Nor in any case is exclusion from membership exclusion, either intentionally or really, either formally or actually, from the grace of salvation. The words of the great apostle-pastor are still the language of apostolic churches: "Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand."¹

It is, then, with the ceaseless interplay of individualism and social dependence, each tending to perfect the other, that a brotherhood in Christ is organized for its world-wide service. The idea is well set forth in the paradoxical motto of that little classic of evangelic literature, Luther's "The Freedom of a Christian man:" "A Christian is a most free lord of all, and subject to none: a Christian is a ministering servant of all, and subject to every one." But the same great word had already been given, as personal testimony, by the Apostle to the nations: "For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more."²

¹2 Cor. i. 24.

²1 Cor. ix. 19.

Part II.

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OFFICE.

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The apostolic age is full of embodiments and principles of the most instructive kind; but the responsibility of choosing the means was left to the Ecclesia itself, and to each ecclesia, guided by ancient precedent on the one hand and adaptation to present and future needs on the other.—*F. J. A. Hort.*

They dwell with the King for his work.
—*Motto of Deaconess Home, Mildmay Park, London.*

Wouldst thou the holy hill ascend?
Wouldst see the Father's face?
To all his other children bend,
And take the lowest place.

Be like a cottage on a moor,
A covert from the wind,
With burning fire and open door,
And welcome free and kind.

—*George Macdonald.*

If two angels came down from heaven to execute a divine command, and one was appointed to conduct an empire and the other to sweep a street in it, they would feel no inclination to change employments.—*John Newton.*

The various theories of the Christian ministry are the key to the entire history of Christendom.—*William Burt Pope.*

I.

OFFICERS AND PEOPLE: THE NEW TESTAMENT IDEA.

IMAGINE a log schoolhouse in the mountains of West Virginia. There, some Sunday afternoon, a little girl drops a penny into the missionary box. The penny contribution is carried across lands and seas to the opposite side of our planet, and with hardly an appreciable loss of value helps to heal a disease or to save a soul in Korea. The same thing will be true of the next Sunday's gift, and the next, and so on indefinitely. And if one should ask the name of that marvelous method by the aid of which so great a little thing is done, the answer would be, *Organization*. Not through magic, but through simple orderly coöperation, the penny falls from the child's hand into some outstretched hand in the antipodes.

Nor need the organizers of a Christian church entertain a moment's doubt that they are following a Divine method. For the further one goes, with observation and research, toward some sort of intelligent acquaintance with the world we live in, the more astounding is the evidence that everywhere the Maker of all things organizes. "The body of an ant," we are told, "is many times more visibly intricate than a steam engine." It comes as a genuine revelation, to find that the smallest bit of living matter which the microscope brings within the range of vision is in its simplicity full of complexities, and most beautifully organized. And when one follows the scientific imagination in its incursions into the constitution of matter itself, with the ever-regulated and interrelated movements of its atoms and electrons, the very last word and the strongest conceivable word seems to be spoken for the ideals of system, order, unity, organization in the making of the world. From the electron all the way upward to the man, it is the same Divine idea, endlessly

illustrated. Truer than he could have known are the words of an ancient sage in praise to the God of his fathers: "Thou hast ordered all things according to measure and number and weight."¹

It is, then, not unreasonably a practical necessity that Christianity, in the doing of its world-wide work, should be organized. But this means that it should have specialized organs, or officers, who, as servants of the one Lord Christ, shall "each in his office wait."

"Even dumb animals and wild herds," says Jerome to his young friend Rusticus, "follow leaders of their own. Bees have princes and cranes fly after one of their number in the shape of a Y." Office, leadership, administration must be. It is a necessity which, variously foretokened on the lower planes of life, asserts itself universally in the human sphere. All serious associations are fain to organize. It is not a conspiracy of lawmakers and rulers that wills a nation into existence, but the people that will the existence of such officers. It is not the priests that make the religionists, but *vice versa*. Social life, like any other, will inevitably put forth organs for the attainment of its ends. Will the social life of Christianity appear as an exception? On the contrary, it will prove to be a most conspicuous example.

It is our present attempt to trace, in the New Testament writings, the processes of office-making, or organizing, in the first Christian churches. True, there is nothing in either the Acts or the Epistles that approaches a detailed account of the organizing of a Christian congregation. Yet sundry notices of such a process occur. In several instances the appointment of ministers, or officers, is narrated, official duties described, or the part of the people in government indicated. Fragmentary information, to be sure; but by careful grouping of passages a reasonably fair outline of the order of the rising Christian communities may be made to appear. We may hope at least that

¹"The Book of Wisdom," xi. 20.

enough will be seen to illustrate the principles on which the organization proceeded.

1. THE BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM, AS SHOWN IN ACTS.

Let us begin at Jerusalem. For it was here in the City of David, where the Lord had been crucified, and where, in obedience to his command, the Messianic testimony of the chosen witnesses had begun to be offered, that the first Christian congregation was formed. We know that it began in much prayer, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in a new realization of the sense of brotherhood; and that for a short time there was little more than simple association.

But we must now follow the course of events somewhat more closely. Immediately after the Ascension the Eleven returned from Olivet to "the upper chamber," for expectant waiting till the promise of the Father should be fulfilled. There were others with them, about a hundred and twenty in all. Mary the mother of Jesus, certain other women, and Jesus' brothers were of the number. "These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer." They elected Matthias to fill the vacated place of the traitor-apostle (a hint of organization)—seeking guidance in a petition that has been reported in the New Testament story.¹

They were still "all together in one place" when the Pentecostal blessing descended. Its symbol was the tongues of flame; its reality, the Spirit given as never before from the beginning of the world, and to abide with the believers in Jesus unto the end.

The Church of the New Covenant was now made possible. Many people, even thousands, at once accepted the evangel of Jesus the Christ. Becoming his followers, they continued in the Apostles' teaching, and in the breaking of bread and the offering of prayers together. Their fellowship was real. Out of a common treasury the wants of all were supplied.² They were at home together:³ amid threatening dangers their prayers were as the prayer of one man.⁴

¹Acts i. 14-26.

²Acts ii.

³Acts iv. 23 (*τοῖς ἰδίους*).

⁴Acts iv. 24-31.

This indeed was not the whole story. That sin¹ and infirmity² should have stained the lovely picture, and shown that not even in those conditions had Israel reached an ideal state, is no more than the persistent power of evil in human hearts might have foreshown.

Thus, then, did the Church of God in the new age of Christ and the Spirit begin. Sharing in the life of the Living One, she arose and entered upon her awful yet glorious mission in a redeemed world of sin.

The first distinct traces of organization are seen in the acknowledged authority of the Twelve—the people voluntarily laying down their money “at the Apostles’ feet”³ for distribution among the needy, and in the election of the Seven to relieve the Apostles of this administrative work.⁴ About fourteen years later we find presbyters in the church in Jerusalem,⁵ and James the brother of the Lord in a position of presidency or leadership.⁶ But as to when or how these appointments were made, no information is available.

James’s position of preëminence was unique. There is no other instance of a single presiding minister of a church in the apostolic age. How, then, may this instance be accounted for? The supposition that the appointment of such an officer in Jerusalem was due to the fact of James’s kinship to our Lord, has been made with some show of probability. At any rate, ecclesiastic tradition relates that, on the death of James, Symeon was chosen as his successor precisely on the ground of being of the lineage of Jesus’ kinspeople. Perhaps there was a hope that such a succession might be kept up till the Lord’s coming again.⁷

It was probably about the year 46 that Paul and Barnabas ap-

¹Acts v. 1-11. ²Acts vi. 1. ³Acts iv. 34, 35. ⁴Acts vi. 1-6.

⁵Acts xi. 29, 30; xii. 25. ⁶Acts xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18; Gal. ii. 12.

⁷“After James the Just had suffered martyrdom, as the Lord had also on the same account, Symeon, the son of the Lord’s uncle, Clopas, was appointed the next bishop. All proposed him as second bishop because he was a cousin of the Lord.” (Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, Bk. IV., xxii., 4.)

pointed presbyters in the recently gathered congregations of Asia Minor.¹ But this is the only note of organization in these churches.

2. TESTIMONY OF THE EARLIER PAULINE EPISTLES.

Turning now to the Pauline Epistles, it will be well to divide them chronologically into the three following groups: those written before the author's imprisonment in Rome—Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians, Romans (*ca.* 53-58); those written during this imprisonment—Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians (*ca.* 59-66); and those written subsequently—Timothy, Titus (*ca.* 64-68).

Two most significant facts will meet us in this study. One is the different rate of development of church organization in different localities. The other is the prominence of the charismatic ministry, or ministry of gifts—that, namely, of Apostle, prophet, teacher, speaker with tongues, interpreter of tongues, discerners of spirits, worker of miracles, “helps,” “governments.” For this ministry of gifts was much more prominent than the appointed ministry, or ministry of government, which was that of presbyter (bishop) and deacon.

In the Epistles to the Thessalonians there is no little exhortation to the members of the Christian community that they encourage and help one another,² but only one reference to officers: “Them that labor among you and are over you in the Lord.”³ And even here the term (*προϊσταμένους*) is general, not technical. It may mean prophet-preachers and teachers, or it may mean officers corresponding more or less closely to those who were afterwards called presbyters—no one can tell.

In Galatians no form of organization is mentioned. Such words of counsel are given as, “If a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual [you that have not given way to such trespasses, but have continued to “walk in the Spirit”] re-

¹Acts xiv. 23.

²1 Thess. iii. 12; iv. 9, 10, 18; v. 11, 14; 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

³1 Thess. v. 12.

store such a one in a spirit of meekness;"¹ and "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."² But this law of Christ, which is love, seems to be the only law of the Christian congregation that occupied the Apostle's mind.

In 1 Corinthians we have the now familiar figure of the Church as a body, with its various organs "tempered together." It is not to be thought of as a unit, "all one member"—the Apostle or the prophet or the pastor, for example, doing all that is done. It is a vital unity, "many members," "one body"—each member, even the "more feeble," having an important part to perform for the general good. Hence there must be no false independence on the one hand—"I have no need of thee"—and no self-disparagement on the other—"I am not of the body."

Then follows the fullest enumeration of officers, offices, functions, gifts (by which name shall they be called?) in the New Testament: "And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues."³ Also, in the fourteenth chapter such additional gifts, or offices, as the discerning of spirits and the interpreting of tongues are mentioned.⁴

In Romans the figure of the Church as a body with mutually dependent organs recurs; and the functions of prophecy, ministry (probably ministration to bodily needs), teaching, giving, ruling (the same word as in Thessalonians, *προϊστάμενος*) and others are designated; and, as in Corinthians, these are called gifts (*χαρίσματα*) from God.⁵ But no particular form of organization is either prescribed or suggested. Indeed, the salutation of the Epistle is not even addressed to a church, or congregation, at Rome, but simply to "all who are in Rome, beloved of God."⁶

In Ephesians there is an enumeration of Christian ministers, as follows: "And he gave some to be Apostles, and some proph-

¹Gal. vi. 1.

²Gal. vi. 2.

³1 Cor. xii. 28.

⁴vs. 13, 26, 29.

⁵Rom. xii. 4-8.

⁶Rom. i. 7.

ets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.¹ In this passage, which should be compared with the parallel passage in Corinthians, the evangelist (or preacher to the unevangelized) finds a place between the prophet and the pastor, or teacher (the two latter names probably indicating the same office). But this is the only additional class of ministers mentioned.

In Colossians we read of ministers, of a ministry "received in the Lord," and of "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God;" but not of any more specific offices or officers of the Christian faith.

Thus far, then, in the Pauline Epistles, no distinct reference is made to regularly elected and ordained officials of the Church. Only a non-official ministry is mentioned. There are spiritual gifts that qualify for callings which take form in services; but are these callings ministries, or offices, and these servants of the Church ministers, or officers? Only, it would seem, in a non-technical, non-official sense.

It is also worthy of more than a passing notice that in this charismatic ministry the Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers were of a higher order than the others. For theirs was not distinctly a ministry of miraculous signs or physical benefits or government—not "miracles," "healings," "helps," "governments," "tongues." It was a ministration of the living word of God; and accordingly these Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers may be described by way of distinction as *the prophetic ministry*.

Let us not go too fast. If necessary, we may be content to linger a few moments to make sure of getting a clear and rememberable impression. The prophetic ministries—those of Apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher—were beyond all comparison the greater. These men were the bearers of the word of salvation. They were the revealers of the mystery of grace, which had been hid from ages and generations, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. "Go preach the gospel—ye

¹ch. iv. 11.

shall receive power—ye shall be witnesses unto me.” This was the Christ’s commission to these ministers of preaching and teaching. And their message has never ceased to be transmitted from tongue to tongue through the Christian ages. So that Christianity may aptly be described as the religion of “the word.”

But there were lesser ministries—miracles, healings, helps, governments, tongues—good and wonderful in themselves and subsidiary to the greater ministries of preacher and teacher. And these subsidiary ministries, or gifts, might appear either in the ministrations of the Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers themselves, or they might appear in the ministrations of those upon whom the gifts of the prophetic ministry had not been bestowed. They contributed either to the discipline and working efficiency of the Church, or to the supply of bodily needs, such as healing for the sick and food for the poor. They too, with the evangel itself, were signs of Christ’s coming kingdom. And under changing forms they too have not ceased to appear even to this good hour.

3. TESTIMONY OF THE LATER PAULINE EPISTLES.

But on taking up the Epistle to the Philippians, probably the last written of the letters of Paul’s first imprisonment, we meet with a new and noteworthy fact. A ministry which is recognized as such by appointment of the Apostles or of the congregation—namely, the ministry of government—emerges. For prominent mention is made of “bishops” and “deacons.”¹ So with the Pastoral Epistles, written later. In 1 Timothy bishops and deacons,² and in Titus bishops,³ occupy a prominent place.

How shall we account for the fact of their having no place in the earlier Epistles? It is possible that they have a place there under the names of “they that are over you” (“he that ruleth”), “helps,” and “governments.” But it seems very probable that in some of the churches addressed they did not exist. If, for example, there were presbyters in Corinth, it is difficult to be-

¹Phil. i. 1.

²ch. iii.

³ch. i. 5-11.

lieve that the Apostle would make no reference to them in connection with the question of discipline to which so much of his attention is given.¹ Yet it may be remembered *per contra* that, earlier than the date of the very earliest Epistle, there were presbyters in the church at Jerusalem,² and also, through the appointment of Paul and Barnabas themselves, in the churches of Asia Minor.³ Then, too, as to the Church at Ephesus, we have the testimony of Acts that it had presbyters as its presiding officers at the time of the Apostle's homeward voyage on his third missionary circuit,⁴ which seems to have been four or five years prior to the writing of the Ephesian Epistle, in which, as we have seen, they are not mentioned.⁵

This at least, let me now repeat, is strongly suggested: that the organization of the widely separated and differently circumstanced churches was subject to no one fixed and invariable rule; and that it went on more rapidly in some cases than in others. It was more rapid, for example, in Asia Minor than in Corinth or Rome. And this also has been shown: that the ministry of gifts precedes both in time and in importance the ministry of government, and that in the mind of the Apostle the law of Christ rather than any governmental ordinance constitutes the Church. First that which is essential, then that which is practically necessary; first the collective spiritual life, then its ever-changing economic form and manifestation. People would get on very poorly without houses to live in, which they must build for themselves; but without the perpetually entering and vitalizing air of heaven, which comes immediately from God, they could not live at all.⁶

¹1 Cor. v. 6.

²Acts xiv. 23.

³Acts xi. 29, 30; xii. 25.

⁴Acts xx. 17.

⁵It may also be worthy of attention that if the "South-Galatian" theory be true, there were presbyters in the churches of Galatia several years before the Epistle to these churches was written. (See Ramsay's "Historic Commentary on Galatians.")

⁶As to the later books of the New Testament. In Hebrews xiii. 7, 17 Christians are bidden to salute, remember, imitate, obey, and submit to their rulers (*ἡγούμενοι*, leaders, rulers), and in 1 Peter v. 1, James v. 14, 2

One thing more. It appears that from the beginning of church organization there were two classes in the ministry of government (just as in the case of the ministry of gifts)—namely, overseers and helpers. The first were regular presiding officers; the others served regularly in some subordinate capacity. The distinction is foreshown in the charismatic “governments” (*κυβερνάω*, lit. “to steer,” “to pilot”) and “helps” of 1 Corinthians, and is explicitly given in the appointed “bishops” and “deacons” of later Epistles. The two kinds of service would be called for by the needs of even an infant Christian society, and indeed are exemplified in human societies everywhere.

If it be thought worth while, the whole Christian ministry taking form and expression in the apostolic age may be shown in some such scheme as the following:

MINISTRY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES.

A. Ministry of Gifts.

- a. Prophetic Ministry (Apostles, prophets, etc.).
- b. Subsidiary Ministry (workers of miracles, etc.).

B. Ministry of Government.

- a. Overseers, or bishops.
- b. Deacons, or helpers.

4. THREE IDEAS OF THE RELATION OF OFFICERS AND PEOPLE.

Looking now more attentively at the relation of officers and people, we shall find at its heart the three ideas of representation, Divine appointment, and service.

(1) It was a *representative* relation. In the Christian brotherhood—indeed, in any local congregation—under the headship of Christ, inhered all governmental and ministerial powers. An

John i., and 3 John i. presbyters are spoken of. None of these passages, however, gives any additional information on our present subject. In the second and third chapters of Revelation the Angel (*ὁ ἄγγελος*) of each of seven churches in Asia Minor is addressed; but the word is too uncertain in meaning to be of service in a study of church officers.

officer was accepted or chosen by a church as the organ through which it undertook to exercise this or that power—its eye or voice or hand. This may be seen, as a matter of course, in the case of such special and temporary appointees as Epaphroditus, Judas and Silas,¹ and others: “Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger (ἀπόστολος) and minister (λειτουργός) to my need;”² “our brethren, they are the messengers (ἀπόστολοι) of the churches;”³ whomsoever ye shall approve by letters, them will I send to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem.⁴

But the same principle is illustrated in the permanent congregational officers—namely, bishops, or presbyters, and deacons. Presbyters were for discipline. But the power of discipline was invested by Divine authority in the congregation itself. We remember that our Lord said concerning a brother’s offense: “Tell it unto the church, and if he refuse to *hear the church also*, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican;”⁵ and that Paul wrote to “the Church of God which is at Corinth,” concerning one of its members who was committing immorality: “Do not *ye* judge them that are within? . . . Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.”⁶ If, therefore, the supreme act of exclusion from membership was a function of the congregation as a whole, all oversight and discipline may be so regarded, the greater including the less. And accordingly in the rule and caretaking of the presbyters, when they came to be appointed, the church was judging and caring for itself.

A similar representative relation was that of the deacons. They were chosen, we may believe, for ministration to the poor. The appointment of the Seven in Jerusalem is perhaps a sufficient illustrative proof.⁷ It was the people that contributed the money or food, and the “seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom,” that were intrusted, as an economic reg-

¹Acts xv. 22. ²Phil. ii. 25. ³2 Cor. viii. 23. ⁴1 Cor. xvi. 3.

⁵Matt. xviii. 17. ⁶1 Cor. v. 12, 13. ⁷Acts vi. 1-6.

ulation, with the office of making distribution of it to the poor widows.¹

So likewise with the ministry of spiritual gifts. Here no less really than in the ministry of government the idea of representation is embodied. For it must be borne in mind that it was Christ in the midst of the people, his mind and spirit in the hearts of them all, that made them a church. Whoever was willing to be "a man in Christ," learning and doing the will of the heavenly Father, became a son of the light. Indeed, is not the same forever true? Through no official position, subordinate or supreme, historic or novel, apostolic or post-apostolic, but through personal love and obedience, comes the illumination of the Spirit of truth. "Who is the God of the Christians?" was tauntingly asked of Pothinus, an aged bishop and martyr of Gaul. "You will know," was the reply, "when you are worthy." So the spiritual life of these Christians of the apostolic age, like that of the Christians of any age, was a common life, and consequently their spiritual gifts a common endowment; all were

¹Lowrie regards the prophetic teacher, in the exercise of his *χάρισμα*, declaring the will of God, as not only the teacher but at the same time the lawgiver and administrator of the Church: "The conduct of the Christian assembly cannot be determined by the assembly itself in the exercise of self-government, but only by the way of teaching, which declares what is the will of God for the Ecclesia. But this is a matter which pertains to the gifted teacher, who in virtue of his *χάρισμα* authoritatively proclaims the word of the Lord and authoritatively deduces its consequences." ("Church and Organization," p. 233.)

But is not this only half the truth? For not simply the prophetic teacher but the people also were under the leadership of the Holy Spirit; they also had received the "anointing" which abode in them and taught them "concerning all things" (1 John ii. 27); they must "discern" while the prophets spoke (1 Cor. xiv. 29), and must discriminate between the false and the true prophet (Rev. ii. 2). And the same is true of the "power of the keys," the authority to admit and exclude church members. Was this power conferred upon an Apostle? Yes. Upon all the Apostles? Yes. Upon the whole Christian congregation? The affirmative answer must still be given. (Matt. xvi. 13-19; John xx. 19-23; Matt. xviii. 15-20.)

So it was the illumined judgment of the people, after all, that was dominant in administration.

partakers of like precious faith, all had some knowledge, wisdom, power of utterance, power of ministration to the bodies and souls of men.

But here and there was a man who possessed these gifts, one or more of them, in an extraordinary degree. That was his distinguishing note. He must use them, therefore, openly; he must preach, teach, heal, minister; but in doing so he was expressing not merely his own inner life, but that also which was common to the congregation; and doing not merely his own work, but that of the church. What was potential in them had become actual in him. The prophet, for example, spoke not from without but from within the congregation. He spoke simply as a gifted *Christian*, simply as one in whom the new life in Christ which to a greater or less extent was striving for expression in his fellow-worshippers, found an articulate voice.

In the prayer meetings of our own day, to find an illustration close at hand, a person who offers prayer, either voluntarily or by invitation of the leader, is expected to express the devotional thought and feeling of those worshiping with him, as truly as his own. If his prayer become purely personal, the unfitness of it is immediately felt. For he is not merely to *go* in the way of devotional expression, but also to *lead*. Similarly, in a church of the apostolic age, whoever would offer prayer or praise must do so not only in spirit but suitably to the hearers and the occasion, that the whole congregation might say the Amen at his giving of thanks.¹ And that which was true of the spoken thanksgiving was also true, though less conspicuously, of the word of counsel, admonition, or exhortation. One spoke in the name of all.

As to the administration of the sacraments. The authority to baptize was embraced in the authority to preach or teach, as seems to be shown not only in the Great Commission,² but also in individual instances.³ Accordingly it shared in whatever representative character attached to the preaching or teaching. And

¹1 Cor. xiv. 15.

²Matt. xxviii. 19.

³Acts viii. 12; ix. 17-19.

as to the Lord's Supper, it was the sacramental meal at which the presiding officer—if, indeed, there were a presiding officer—invoked the Divine blessing in the name of the whole assembly: "The cup which *we* bless; . . . the bread which *we* break."¹

In the offices of Apostle and evangelist, however, the representative relation toward the congregation did not always appear. Here, therefore, was an exception to the rule. It is true, when the disciples in Jerusalem laid down their money at the Apostles' feet for distribution to the needy, the Apostles in discharging their trust were representing the people as truly as were the Seven who afterwards attended to this business.² But such was not the usual procedure. Characteristically Apostles and evangelists were beforehand with the people. They were originators; they went everywhere, under the commission and command of their Master, to win converts and establish churches where none had been before. How could they be representatives of a congregation that was just coming into existence through their testimony?

Yet this also is true: that when, through the word of an Apostle or an evangelist, a congregation had been gathered, the faith and experience of this itinerant preacher became its own faith and experience, which was uttered henceforth through him to others. His testimony was the more widely spoken testimony of that congregation. Accordingly the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch did not hesitate to lay their hands upon

¹1 Cor. x. 16.

"The use of the plural 'we,' in reference both to the blessing of the cup and the breaking of the bread, clearly indicates that it was in virtue of his representing the whole company present, and not as individually possessed of some supernatural gift, that the one who presided at a Communion performed the act of consecration." (Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, *in loco*.) Even so sturdy a sacerdotalist as Bishop Gore can go far enough in this direction to say: "We have no clear information [in the New Testament] as to who exactly can celebrate the eucharist or who can baptize." ("The Church and the Ministry," p. 246.)

²Acts iv. 34, 35; vi. 2-4.

Barnabas and Saul and bid them go forth on a great missionary circuit; and so these apostles of Christ, indorsed and sent by that Christian congregation, were in reality their accepted and accredited representatives.¹

Reverting now for a moment to the officers of rule and administration, the ministry of government, we may note that it might have been expected that they, being the representatives of the people, would have been elected by them. And so they were, in some instances certainly, in others probably. The Seven² and certain special messengers were thus elected.³ As to presbyters, we are told that Paul and Barnabas appointed these officers in Asia Minor.⁴ It does not follow, however, that the people had nothing to do with these appointments. For the silence of a historian is not always an expressive silence. In this case it may reasonably be regarded as inexpressive. And reasoning from the analogy of the cases just mentioned, of the manner of making elders in Israel,⁵ and of the custom of the sub-apostolic age, it will appear not unlikely that these presbyters were appointed by the voice of the whole church over which they must preside.⁶ In all cases, however, the strong probability is that, where an Apostle was present, his approval was practically necessary to such an appointment. Would he, on the one hand, indorse or

¹Acts xiii. 1-3.

²Acts vi. 3, 5.

³1 Cor. xvi. 3.

⁴Acts xiv. 23.

⁵See page 211.

⁶It has been maintained that a popular election is meant in this case, because of the word used for "appointed" (*χειροτονέω*, literally, "to stretch out the hand"). But while this word, in accordance with its literal meaning, was applied to an election by popular vote, it was also employed to denote a simple appointment or designation. (See Thayer, "Lexicon of the Greek New Testament," *in loco*). In the first of these senses it occurs in 2 Corinthians viii. 19; and in the second, in Peter's address to the household of Cornelius (Acts x. 41).

Dr. Ramsay finds, in Luke's habitual exactness of language as a historian, an argument for the literal sense of the word in Acts xiv. 23 ("St. Paul the Traveler," pp. 121, 122). On the other hand, it may very reasonably be held that, in these unorganized congregations in Lystra and the other Asian cities, the people would preferably leave the matter of organizing largely in the hands of the apostles through whom they had so recently been won to a profession of faith in Jesus.

ordain a man whom he regarded as unfit to serve? or would the congregation, on the other, appoint a man whom their Apostle-pastor disapproved? Both Apostle and people, we may reasonably believe, must approve—very much as in the case of the missionary or evangelist and his newly converted little congregation in the present day.

(2) But all church officers were acknowledged as of *Divine appointment*. “*God hath set some in the Church*, first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues.” “Helps” and “governments” as well as “gifts of healing” or “prophets” or even “Apostles,” let us observe, were “set in the Church” by the hand of God. “The flock in the which *the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops*,” was Paul’s word to the Ephesian elders.

How was this shown? By the very bestowment of the gracious gifts necessary to fit men, this or that one, for the office. These charisms, each determining its appropriate spiritual function, bore immediately from God himself the authority for their exercise. “Having *gifts* differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy; . . . or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; . . . he that ruleth with diligence.” Having *gifts*—such is the Apostle’s exhortation—let us use them, and so prophesy, minister, teach, rule.

Many things do not wait to be “authorized.” The light of the sun asks no man’s permission to shine: enough that the Father of lights has kindled it. The eye *must* see, the tongue *must* speak, the hands *must* labor, because it is for this they were made. Similarly the spiritual gifts of God must be used at every opportunity by the men and women⁴ to whom, as stewards

¹1 Cor. xii. 28.

²Acts xx. 28.

³Rom. xii. 6, 7.

⁴Restrictions, indeed, were placed upon the speaking of women in the congregation (1 Cor. xiv. 35; 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12). Such restrictions were needful in that age; and in spirit, though not in letter, they are applicable to all ages. Cf. similar restrictions upon the disuse of the veil (1 Cor. xi. 4-15). It is not to be inferred, however, that women were forbidden to use

of his manifold grace, they are intrusted. The attitude of the apostolic churches toward them was that of recognition, not of original authorization.¹

Was the government, then, democratic? It may be so described, but very inadequately. In the true and fuller sense, it was charismatic, and hence *theocratic*. Did the officers represent the people? As we have seen, yes; but more immediately and truly they represented the immanent Christ, the Spirit of truth in the congregation. Was it the prophetic teacher's word that was looked to for guidance and law? It was indeed the word of God *through* the prophetic teacher.

Hence it is the gift and its exercise rather than the office or the officer, upon which apostolic emphasis is laid. In the great passage just now quoted the second time from 1 Corinthians, officers and gifts are coördinated: side by side with "Apostles," "prophets," "teachers," are "miracles" (not miracle-workers), "gifts of healing" (not healers), "helps" (not helpers), "governments" (not governors), "divers kinds of tongues" (not speakers with tongues). Why this coördination of officers and gifts? The simplest explanation is that the gift of "miracles" and those that follow in this enumeration had not given rise, like the gifts of apostleship, prophecy, and teaching, to anything like distinct offices or officers. Because of the irregularity and infrequency of their exercise by any one person, or because they

the prophetic gift under all circumstances in the apostolic churches. In fact, it is plainly shown that they did use it (Acts ii. 17; xxi. 8, 9; 1 Cor. xi. 5, 13).

¹"The Church was not to develop her ministry from below, but to receive it from above by apostolic authorization." (Gore, "The Church and the Ministry," p. 248.) Would it not be a truer confession of faith that the Church was "to receive her ministry from above by" Divine vocation, and to have wisdom to recognize it when given?

"It seems hard for the advocate of apostolic succession to understand that 'from above' is from the Spirit of God, and that the Spirit may use any humble instrument to effect his call. A John may baptize a Jesus; an Ananias may lay hands on a Paul, and unknown prophets ordain the first Christian missionary apostle, at Antioch." (Dulles, "The True Church," p. 191.)

were not exercised in the congregation but privately, or perhaps because of their subordinate spiritual importance, they remained as "gifts" only, and were spoken of accordingly. But however this may have been, in all cases—that of prophesying as well as that of healing, that of teaching as well as that of speaking with tongues—it is the gift rather than the office or the officer that is significant. Hence the immediately following exhortation: "Desire earnestly the greater gifts."¹ Not the greater offices or positions, but the qualifications for them. To receive and exercise the charisms of the Holy Spirit—that was all.

No, not all; there was something more, and incomparably better. The qualifying gifts were themselves to be qualified by the heart of love. Here is the "still more excellent way," the innermost secret of spiritual power. Apart from this, even the tongues of angels would be discordant and the martyr's death a vanity. Gifts which, exercised for self-gratification, excite confusion and wrangling in the house of God, when thrilled through with the spirit of love make for unity and strength. Gifts may scatter and destroy—the brethren at Corinth, falling apart into factions, were gifted; "love buildeth up."²

It is in the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of Paul's First Epistle to these Christian brethren that instructions are given for the regulation of the use of gifts. And the intermediate chapter, the thirteenth—what of that? That, as we all know, is in praise of love. The order of topics is significant—a discourse on gifts with the hymn of love singing itself forth in the midst of it. Which would seem to say that at the very heart of all gifts is that which is incalculably more than any gift, the root and crown of the Church's life, the all-fulfilling grace of Christlike love.

(3) But the combination of gifts and love in the spiritual life will result, as already suggested, in *service*. Is this, then, one element in the relationship of officers and people in the Christian congregation? It is the chief. Let it be lost, and that relation-

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 31.

² 1 Cor. xiii.

ship will be utterly emptied of meaning. Office is ministry. Otherwise it has no reason or right to be. As well suppose the "governor" of an engine to be put in position, as a regulator, for its own sake and not for the sake of the whole body of machinery and its output, as to suppose a governor of people to be elected for his own sake.

The principle is not confined to organized Christianity. It is universally applicable.

In point of fact—and the fact is worthy of more than this parenthetical remark—the same thing is true also of "representation" and of "Divine appointment." Stripped of what is local and temporary and of what is distinctively Christian, the government of the earliest Christian churches illustrates the essential principles of all government, civil or ecclesiastical. In proportion as any society approximates an ideal perfection, the relation of officers to people will be that of representation, Divine appointment, and service.

When, therefore, the civil office-holder acts from any motive inconsistent with the welfare of the people, he is doing no less culpable a deed than to pervert the ends of a divine institution. Is he one of those, for example, whom Jesus describes when he says, "Ye know that they who are accounted [or supposed] to rule over the Gentiles, lord it over them"—tyrannize, instead of ruling? It is a case of unfaithfulness to the God of men and of nations. In Church and State alike, the true ruler is father and friend, the servant of all. It is the very law of Christ that is personalized in the prophet's vision of kingship: "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."¹ For this law of love makes no exception of the seats of official power. It includes the world from hovel to throne.

But subtle as the action of any physical poison is the process by which even the eager servant of the Church may be corrupted

¹Isa. xxxii. 2.

into the self-centered office-holder. He may have begun as a very Stephanas, setting himself, with his household, to minister to others,

More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise,

and for that very reason *raised by his brethren* to some service of rulership.¹ But now the joy of self-sacrificing service is departing from his life, and he seems to know it not. He is yielding to the charms of prominence and position in the house of God itself. And the church might say, like a neglected friend, "He no longer cares for me;" the meaning of which complaint is: "He no longer loves me." To love is to "care for."

"As the light of the morning when the sun riseth" is the New Testament teaching of this law of unselfish service in office and rulership in the Church. One great word of the Divine Founder will suffice for illustration. He was on his way to the Cross. Yet the Twelve, who accompanied him, had been disputing among themselves by the way as to "who should be the greatest." They seem indeed to have felt somewhat the shame of it; for when asked concerning the question in dispute, they had nothing to say. Then the Master, who knew all the meaning of their silence, sat down as a teacher, called them to him, and said, "If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all;" and taking a little child in his arms, he taught them: "Who-soever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me."² What cares the little child for honors and authority and worldly "greatness?" The Master's own heart was the child-heart, and his hand the hand of a "minister." He would have it be so, likewise, with all those who are called by his name, even unto the end of the world. In the kingdom of heaven greatness is childlikeness and service.

The true process of office-making, then, is unmistakable in the New Testament. It is a divine order. First the spiritual

¹1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16.

²Mark ix. 33-37.

gift qualifying for some particular form of service—teaching, evangelizing, healing, ruling; together with the gift, the grace of Christian love, enkindling the heart for service; then the exercise of the imparted gift in actual ministration; and then the recognition, formal or informal, of such service, by the congregation, and its regular continuance under their sanction.

And in this process of office-making appear the three formative ideas with which our attention has just now been engaged: those of *representation*, *Divine appointment*, and the *service of love*.

II.

OFFICERS AND PEOPLE: LOSS AND RECOVERY OF THE IDEA.

WE have seen that in the apostolic age church officers as such had no exceptional powers. What they did was not some act of administration from outside which no others could share, and without which no others could come into covenant with Christ. It was a ministration which the congregation itself performed through them as its representatives. The Christian congregation itself had authority to preach, to teach, to baptize, to administer the Lord's Supper, to elect its own officers, to exercise discipline as God might give ability. So far as these offices were committed into the hands of chosen or accepted individuals, it was a matter of order and efficiency, not of distinction in spiritual power. There was no clerical caste.

In a word, officers were ministers *Divinely appointed* by the gifts bestowed upon them, chosen or accepted for *service*, and in all their functions *representative* of the congregation.

Now from this apostolic starting point the history might be called, in the language of familiar metaphor, the development of a planted seed just breaking the crust of the soil, into the many-branched and majestic tree. But it might also be described by a very different figure. The fall of the snow "from white sky to black earth, that," it has been said, "is the history of an organized faith"—inevitable contamination attending the truth of Christ in the hands of its organizers. Perhaps we shall find the two metaphors equally true and equally one-sided.

To what extent, then, has the original, or New Testament, idea been followed by the subsequent generations of Christians? That is the question before us now.

I. IDEA OBSERVED IN SUB-APOSTOLIC AGE.

The idea was followed without misgiving or deviation, so far as can be gathered from the scanty information available, in the generation immediately succeeding the apostolic age. The relation of officers and people was the same as before. All spiritual functions still belonged to the local congregation. The Christian people were still permitted to preach or teach,¹ to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper,² to elect and dismiss officers,³ to expel from membership in the Church.⁴ And some

¹Let him that teaches, though he be one of the laity, yet if he be skillful in the word and grave in his manners, teach; for "they shall all be taught of the Lord." (Apost. Const., VIII. 32.)

Of like import is the case of Origen, who, as a layman, preached and expounded the Scriptures in the public congregation in Cæsarea, at the request of the bishops of Palestine, and was rebuked by the bishop of Alexandria, not for the preaching and teaching but for doing it when a bishop was present. (Eusebius, H. E., vi. 16-18.)

²"Even laymen have the right to baptize; for what is equally received can be equally given. Unless bishops or priests or deacons be on the spot, *other* disciples are called—*i. e., to the work.*" (Tertullian on Baptism, c. 17.)

"In many places we find it the practice [for the bishop to baptize] more by way of honoring the episcopate than by any compulsory law. . . . If necessity so be, we know that even laymen may, and frequently do, baptize." (Jerome, "Against the Luciferians," c. 9.)

"Let that be deemed a proper eucharist which is [administered] either by the bishop or by one to whom he has intrusted it." (Ignatius to the Smyrnæans, c. 8.) The tone of this, together with other passages in the letters of Ignatius, indicates that the presidency of a church officer at the Lord's Supper was not the law or universal custom.

³"Now appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord." (Didache, c. 15.)

"Those therefore who were appointed by them [the Apostles] or by other men of repute, with the consent of the whole church, . . . these men we consider to have been unjustly thrust out of their ministrations. For it will be no light sin for us, if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the bishop's office unblamably." (Clement, "Epis. to Corinthians," c. 44. Cf. Polycarp to Philippians, c. 11.)

⁴"Who, then, among you is noble-minded? who compassionate? who full of love? Let him declare: 'If on my account sedition and disagreement and schisms have arisen, I will depart, I will go away whithersoever ye desire, and I will do what the majority command; only let the flock of Christ live

of these things were done by them, as the references just given show, through successive generations or even centuries.¹

2. PERVERSION OF THE MINISTRY INTO A HIERARCHY.

But in the swift course of the years a radical and far-reaching change was wrought. The ministry of gifts gradually declining, the ministry of government meanwhile elevated itself more and more above the people. Not only, indeed, did it rise above them: it finally separated itself from them by a sharply defined caste distinction.

What were the causes of this fateful separation between official and non-official members of the Christian brotherhood?

(1) One cause was the increasing tendency to *lean upon constituted authority*. The churches, growing larger in membership, were at the same time becoming poorer apparently in spiritual gifts. Meanwhile the need of a strong government for the maintenance of unity in the midst of heresies and schisms was more keenly felt. Therefore let the chosen leaders, on whom rested the chief responsibility, speak the word of counsel or judgment or command, and let the people hearken and obey. Such was the measure of self-protection and orderly procedure that came to be adopted.

As early, indeed, as the close of the first century we find Clement of Rome drawing an analogy between the relation of priest to people under the Mosaic economy, and the relation of officers to people in the Christian Church.² And only a few years later Ignatius of Antioch urges absolute submission to the bishop, or pastor, as to Christ himself.³

(2) This undue officializing movement was accelerated by the *form in which the Lord's Supper came to be celebrated*. It is

on terms of peace with the presbyters set over it.'” (Clement to Corinthians, c. 54.)

¹Here the claim and custom of modern congregationalists are almost entirely scriptural and primitive. (Cf. Heermance, “Democracy in the Church,” pp. 141, 142.)

²To the Corinthians, c. 40. ³Ephesians, 6; Trallians, 2; Magnesians, 3.

true that Jesus' memorial feast should have had just the opposite effect; and so it might, had the manner of its observance remained the same as in the beginning. For at that time all the communicants sat together and partook of the sacramental meal at a common table. But when the bishop, with his council of elders, had been appointed in each congregation, and when, also, the number of communicants had become too large to admit of their sitting at the table together, the bishop sat there as president, and on either side of him the elders, while the people came to the table, a few at a time—the deacons waiting upon them—and received the bread and wine standing.¹

There were the bishop and the elders seated, like the ruler and the elders in the synagogue;² or, as the Church of that age conceived it, like the Lord and his Apostles at the Last Supper. Here were the people standing apart, or merely approaching their office-bearers to receive the holy symbols at their hands. It was an object-lesson of official separateness rather than of congregational unity and fraternity. Taking part in it, Sunday after Sunday, would exert its proper (yet most improper) influence upon the participant's mind. It would familiarize him with the idea of occupying the lower place.³

(3) Another cause was *financial*. The officers were supported, at least in part, by the people. Not as a matter of professional fees or of hirelings' wages, but of brotherly coöperation and practical necessity, they were made recipients of contributions of money or provisions. "Tend the flock of God," says the Apostle Peter to presbyters, . . . "nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind"⁴—an injunction which implies that the presbyters

¹Const. Apos., VIII., ii., 12, 13.

²Neh. viii. 4; Matt. xxiii. 6.

³"It can hardly be doubted that the separation which was here involved between the congregation on the one hand, and the bishop, presbyters, and deacons on the other, was a potent factor in developing the idea of the *clerus* as a separate class in the community. It must at once have accentuated the notion of rank." (Lowrie, "The Church and Its Organization," p. 287.)

⁴1 Pet. v. 2. Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 14; Gal. vi. 6; 1 Tim. v. 17, 18 (in which passage unless the meaning of the word *honor* (τιμή) be "price," or "hon-

received pay from the congregation, and shows at the same time that their services must not be rendered on that account. The *Didache* also teaches that "the true prophet" should not be a money-seeker, but that when settled in a church he is morally entitled, as is "the true teacher" likewise, to a support.¹

The prevalent custom in the post-apostolic churches seems to have been to maintain a common fund out of which the ministry and the poor alike received allowances. The ministry received theirs, however, only in case of actual need; and hence not as salary or wages, but rather as a contribution to the needy.² The ministerial office did not require its incumbents to give up their ordinary occupation—as mechanics, tradesmen, or farmers, for example³—and so, it may be supposed, did not, for the most part, seriously interfere with self-support. When it did thus interfere, however, or when for any cause the rulers and leaders of the Church were in need of the necessities of life, these were

orarium," the logical connection of the two verses does not appear); 2 Tim. ii. 4-7.

In this last passage, after reminding Timothy, the temporary chief pastor in Ephesus, that "the husbandman that laboreth must be the first to partake of the fruits," the apostle adds the significant injunction and assurance: "Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things." Does Paul mean that spiritual discernment is necessary to discriminate between ordinary work with its wages and the due response of a Christian congregation to the spiritual service of its ministers?

¹*Didache*, 13. It will be noted that nothing is said here concerning the support of bishops and deacons—perhaps because they were not held in such high esteem, perhaps because, unlike the prophets and teachers, they were able to support themselves. (Cf. Eusebius, *H. E.* VI., xliii., 11.)

²The first recorded instance of a church teacher or officer receiving a stipulated salary is that of Natalius, who, in the beginning of the third century, was paid the sum of one hundred and fifty denarii (about twenty-five dollars) a month; and this was while serving as bishop in a heretical sect. (See Eusebius, *H. E.*, V., xxviii., 10.)

³"Even the learned clergy shall gain their living by a trade. (Can. 51.) The clergy shall gain their food and clothing by a trade or by agriculture, without prejudice to their office." (Can. 52.) So decreed the (supposed) Fourth Council of Carthage (398).

There were later councils, however, that forbade the clergy to follow secular pursuits.

distributed to them.¹ It might be added that doubtless both the character and the position of such men would give special weight to their claim as compared with that of other needy church members.²

But even though there were the "ready mind" in shepherding the flock, and even though the pay were small and irregular, and even though it were given only in necessitous cases, yet the bare fact of pecuniary maintenance would have some effect to set the ministry apart as a distinct class in the Church.

True, such a fact need not of itself prove to be a potent separative influence. But when, under the laws of the Emperor Constantine, church officers received an allowance from the state, and through this, together with other causes, became financially independent and even wealthy, their wealth did tend, as wealth will always tend, to create a class distinction.

(4) Then, too, in the official acceptance of Christianity as the religion of the Empire, there lurked another and a more effectual cause of this official class distinction. For this great act of the Emperor was followed by the bestowal of various *honors and privileges upon the clergy*. Before the lapse of many years they were exempted from what was then the "almost intolerable burden" of holding civil offices, from the payment of certain taxes, and in the case of petty crimes from the jurisdiction of the civil

¹It was on this ground that the founder of Methodism based the claim of ministerial support: "For I look upon all this revenue [contributed by the members of the United Society], be it what it may, as sacred to God and the poor; out of which, if I want anything, I am relieved, even as another poor man. So were originally all ecclesiastical revenues, as every man of learning knows, and the bishops and priests used them only as such. If any use them otherwise now, God help them." (Tyerman, "Life of Wesley," Vol. I., p. 551.)

²An illustration may be found in a passage of the Apost. Const. concerning the distribution of food at church feasts. The instructions are that the pastor shall have the first-fruits; then, "as much as is given to every one of the elder women, let double so much be given to the deacon in honor of Christ," a double portion also to presbyters as to those who "labor continually about the word and doctrine," "and if there be a reader, let him receive a single portion, in honor of the prophets." (Bk. II., 28.)

courts. As to the bishops, they became civil magistrates, and were so highly esteemed for their office' sake that the emperor himself did not disdain to kiss their hand;¹ as indeed is done in the case of priests by the king of Roumania and even by the Czar of Russia in the present day.

(5) Still another cause was the extraordinary growth of *monasticism* (say, from the fourth century onward for 800 years). The operation of this cause may easily be traced. Let it be borne in mind that originally there were no two standards of personal piety in the Church, one for the ministry and the other for the people. It is indeed a lofty standard which the New Testament sets before the presbyter and the deacon, but not one hair's-breadth higher than that which it sets before all Christians.² To be a Christian was to be in principle and spirit a saint. Whether officer or private member of the congregation, it was all the same. "A minister," it has been said even in our own enlightened day, "ought to be different from others—eat differently, drink differently, talk and act differently." Different *how* and *why*? A Christian, whether with or without a specific office in the Church, must strive and must help his brethren to strive after the realization of a perfect manhood in Jesus Christ—this was the teaching under which the apostolic churches were gathered and governed. Experience, spirit, morals, manners were the same for all.

But afterwards, as we have seen in the study of Individualism, when the Empire itself was coming, unregenerate, into the Church, and to be a Christian meant practically hardly more than to have been baptized, it came to pass that anxious or earnest souls tended, through reaction from the prevailing worldliness and formality, toward ascetic observances and a life of seclusion. Nor was it an unpopular movement. On the contrary, the monk was lauded as the typical Christian. Formerly the Church itself

¹Smith and Cheatham's Dictionary, Art. "Immunities of the Clergy."

²1 Tim. iii. 1-13.

was regarded as opening the door to the higher life; now, the monastery.

But it was felt to be an unseemly thing that the Christian minister should live a less stringent life than the monk, who, as such, was only a layman. Hence it came to be expected of the ministry that they should follow a higher rule of conduct than the laity. They, like the monks, must practice asceticism. They must deny themselves amusements that were innocent enough in others. Celibacy was declared to be their only proper state of life.¹ Thus, representing the idea of the more perfect religious character, as it was conceived in that age, ministers were elevated in popular estimation still higher above the people's level.²

(6) But all these influences combined must pale into insignificance before the great determining cause that enthroned the minister of Christ in awful isolation beyond the reach of his brethren. That cause was the prevalence of *sacerdotalism*. As early as the beginning of the third century the sacerdotal conception appears in Christian literature; and some years later it was more distinctly enunciated, together with its twin idea, the apostolic succession,³ by Cyprian of Carthage. The presbyterate was transformed into a priesthood. The priest and he only could impart sacramental grace and exercise dominion in the Church of God.

¹More than one provincial council in the fifth century legislated in its favor; but it was never universally enforced as a requirement. At the Council of Nice a number of bishops were inclined to declare clerical celibacy to be the law of the Church. But through the dissuasion of an exemplary and influential bishop, Paphnutius, they consented to desist from enacting such a canon. See Ecclesiastical Histories of Socrates (I., 11) and Sozomen (I., 23). Nor did any other of the Seven Councils that were accounted ecumenical pass a law on the subject.

²"They had a separate civil status, they had separate emoluments, they were subject to special rules of life. The shepherd bishop driving his cattle to their rude pasturage among the Cyprian hills, the merchant bishop of North Africa, the physician presbyter of Rome were vanished types whose living examples could be found no more." (Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," p. 163.)

³For the intimate relationship of sacerdotalism and apostolic succession, see Gore. "The Church and the Ministry." pp. 70. 71.

3. DIFFERENTIATION OF THE TERMS "CLERGY" AND "LAITY."

It may be worth while to notice here the differentiation of the terms *clergy* and *laity* in ecclesiastical usage. Originally the name *clergy* (ὁ κληρὸς) meant something—for example, a pebble, or a bit of wood—that was used in casting lots.¹ Then, through association of ideas, it came to mean that which is obtained by casting lots, and through a further association of ideas, that which is obtained in some other way; as, for example, by inheritance.² Then, again, the term was applied to *people*, when they were thought of metaphorically as the inheritance of the one who had the care of them. It is in this sense that the apostle Peter exhorts the presbyters not to rule arrogantly over the "clergy:" "Tend the flock of God, . . . neither as lording it over *the charge allotted* (τῶν κληρῶν) you."³ And now we need particularly to note that it is in this same sense that the term is applied to *all God's people* when they are called metaphorically his own inheritance,⁴ as in the words of Paul to the Ephesians, describing Christians generally as a "clergy," or heritage, in Christ, "in whom also we were made a heritage (ἐκκληρώθημεν)."⁵ For the evident meaning here is that Christians are God's own inheritance. In like manner we find Ignatius of Antioch speaking of the Lord's people as a "clergy," Christ's inheritance, among whom he would fain be numbered: "That I may be found in the lot (κλήρω) of the Christians of Ephesus."⁶ Ere long, however, the term came to be applied distinctively to the ministry, probably as those who are the *chief or representative people of God*.⁷

Then, as these clergy became priests, the name gathered unto itself the sacerdotal meaning, which is totally different from its original sense.

¹Matt. xxvii. 35.²Acts i. 17; viii. 21; xxvi. 18.³1 Pet. v. 3.⁴It is an idea of the Old as well as of the New Covenant. (Deut. iv. 20; ix. 29; Joel iii. 2.)⁵Ephesians i. 11.⁶To the Ephesians, 11.⁷Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, s. 7.

On the other hand, as the laity (or *people*, ὁ λαός) lost their former position in the Church and were brought into such disparaging contrast with the clergy, their name meant less than before. They were no longer people so much as minors, children. They were sheep in a perverted sense of the beautiful Scripture metaphor. "Sheep," said Iago Lainez, general of the Jesuits, addressing the Council of Trent, "are animals destitute of reason, and in consequence they can have no part in the government of the Church."

Thus clergy and laity became purely ecclesiastic terms, devoid of all evangelic meaning.

During this whole time (say, 200-1200, a thousand years) the people were being gradually dispossessed of their privileges and rights. Or, to say the same thing from a different point of view, they were gradually prevented from doing their proper duty and service as members of the Christian brotherhood. They were forbidden to preach or to teach in the presence of a bishop, or in the presence of the clergy except at a bishop's command, and later forbidden to preach or teach at all.¹ They were not permitted to approach the altar in partaking of the Lord's Supper, and in the Eastern Church not permitted even to witness the consecration of the elements. The administration of discipline also was wholly removed out of their hands.²

But how about their part in electing church officers? Even

¹"It does not befit a layman to dispute or teach publicly, thus claiming for himself authority to teach; but he should yield to the order appointed by the Lord, and open his ears to those who have the grace to teach." (Council in Trullo (692), Canon 64.)

²"That cases of discipline were judged by the whole community, assembled under the presidency of its officers, so late as the time of Cyprian, is clear from the letter of the Roman Church to him (St. Cyprian Epist. 30, 31). . . . This is in harmony with the general analogy of the Christian communities to the contemporary secular communities, in which all matters of importance were decided '*conventu pleno*.' . . . In course of time the church officers came to act alone in matters of discipline, and, still later, their power so to act was regarded as an inalienable attribute of the priesthood." (Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," p. 120, footnote.)

Leo the Great, conscientious and thoroughgoing autocrat as he was, declared that "he who is to preside over all should be elected by all." But this permission too was withdrawn,¹ though in some cases as late as the eleventh century laymen continued to cast their votes in the election of bishops.² We find them voting at times, it is true, in a most irregular and even violent manner. For instance, when Ambrose, the Roman governor at Milan and only an unbaptized layman in the Church, while trying to quell a tumult which had arisen in the congregation over the choice of a bishop, was himself chosen bishop by a loud impromptu acclamation; or when Augustine, while quietly sitting as a visitor in the church at Hippo, in the midst of a sermon by Valerius the pastor, was eagerly called upon by the congregation, then and there, to become assistant pastor, and in the face of his protestations and tears was constrained to accept the office. Now such demonstrations, however well they may have resulted in these and some other historic instances, were not favorable to the idea of popular elections. They afforded the officary something of a reason, and apparently much more of a pretext, for taking the suffrage out of the people's hands. But these vehement popular demonstrations can only be regarded as rare exceptions. Usually the people seem to have voted regularly, together with the clergy, and probably with a wisdom not unworthy of co-operation with theirs.

But this right was afterwards universally denied them. The priesthood had become the active Church; the laity, passive recipients.

¹There was opposition to it before Leo's day: "The election of those who are to be appointed to the priesthood is not to be committed to the multitude." (Council of Laodicea (347-381), Canon XIII.)

²"The election of bishops by the people continued to be the practice till the time of Cyprian, Ambrose, and Augustine, who were all so elected." (Schaff, "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," p. 73 n.)

Indeed the people of Rome took part with the clergy in the election of the pope until the year 1059, when, under a decree of Nicholas II., this right of suffrage was restricted to the cardinals, with whom it has ever since rested.

This idea of organized Christianity as a clergy-church has been completed and perpetuated in world-wide enterprise by the Church of Rome. Would a father, asks the Roman theologian, in framing or executing laws for the management of his household, take the vote of his little children? His divinely given responsibility and his superior wisdom would render such a course preposterous. There is power and charm in infantine voices, but not if they undertake to speak in tones of counsel or authority. Similarly the Roman hierarchs, with the Bishop of Rome at their head, claim to be divinely charged with the guidance and government of the Church while time endures, and to be qualified for their office by a spiritual illumination to which the laity can lay no claim. To admit others, therefore, whatever their intellectual capacities, to any share in such functions would be gross unfaithfulness and unwisdom. "Note, venerable brethren," says the present Pope, in his Encyclical *Pascendi*, of September 8, 1907, concerning Modernism, "the appearance already of that most pernicious doctrine which would make the laity a factor of progress in the Church."

Let us not lay the whole blame, however, upon the leaders. The people themselves had much to do, at least indirectly, with the fixing of their own position. Did they not probably have more to do with it than did the leaders themselves? Doubtless they were but too willing, in the majority of instances, to receive their religion at second-hand—and are so now. It was through a lack of personality; and it showed the absence of a thoroughly inwrought Christian faith, which would have created the true personal manhood. Some one has finely remarked that "when Diogenes said that he had never seen a man, he uncovered the whole opportunity of secular barbarism, social exclusiveness, political injustice, and *religious quackery*."

4. ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE IN THE HISTORY OF ORDINATION.

This radical change in the way of regarding the ministry in its relation to the people is well illustrated in the history of the rite of ordination. As in the first century, so in the second, this

rite was simply the induction into office—usually, though not, it seems, invariably, by the laying on of hands¹—of a man who was already supposed to have received the necessary spiritual gift.² He might be elected by the people. He might be chosen for the congregation by one or more apostolic men. He might be called by the concurrent voice of the people and their apostolic leaders. But, in any case, it is not a matter of doubt that the human appointment was made in the faith of a previous appointment at the hand of the Lord. As in the ancient time “the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him,”³ so in the apostolic age the ordination was given because of “the spirit” in the ordinand, and not that he might receive the Spirit through the ordination. “Having gifts differing according to the *grace that was given to us*, whether prophecy, . . . or ministry, . . . he that *ruleth* (ὁ προϊστάμενος) with diligence.”⁴

Similarly in later times the congregation was bidden to pray, after having elected their bishop, or pastor: “O God, strengthen him *whom Thou hast prepared for us*.”⁵

But as the sacerdotal and prelatic idea gathered strength, defining itself meanwhile more distinctly from the third century onward, it developed the sensuous fancy that spiritual fitness for office was given in the act of ordination itself. The Holy Spirit was communicated to the applicant for the priesthood through

¹Hatch, “Organization of Early Christian Churches,” pp. 133, 134. To take a modern instance, the British Wesleyan Conference ordained elders, for more than a generation (1793-1836), by simple election without laying on of hands.

²Acts vi. 1-6; Titus i. 5-9. As to the case of Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 6, 7, see p. 284 ff.

³Num. xxvii. 18.

⁴Rom. xii. 6-8.

Does it need to be added that the word “ordain,” as used in the Authorized Version of the New Testament (*e. g.*, in Mark iii. 14; John xv. 16; Acts xiv. 23), is the translation of Greek words (ποιέω, τίθημι, χειροτονέω) which mean simply to make, to constitute, to appoint, implying nothing as to the imposition of hands?

⁵Canons of Alexandria (wrongly ascribed to Hippolytus), II.

the laying on of a bishop's hands. So "holy orders" became a sacrament, superstitiously believed to convey a spiritual power of which the unordained are wholly destitute.¹

5. SOME CHANGE OF ORGANIC FORM DEMANDED.

Now it is a long way, more than a thousand years, that we have traveled from the time of the Master and his first disciples. But the distance in time is not greater than the change of form in organization and ordinances that has taken place in his religion.

Some change of form, indeed, was not only inevitable but highly desirable. It would be demanded by a religion that should remain forever the same in its principles and spirit—demanded by that very inward steadfastness. A man whose immutable principle of conduct is to do good to others will learn to "become all things to all men." He may be old this morning and young this evening, an Englishman to-day and a German to-morrow. So with any institution or body of men. A living church, therefore, holding fast its essential truth through all intellectual moods or historic discoveries, ever bearing witness of the Eternal, will be sensitive in method and administration to the conditions of the time. For the conditions of the time are the Church's providential opportunity.

But is this the case before us? By no fair construction of the

¹"If any one says that by sacred ordination the Holy Spirit is not given, and that vainly therefore do the bishops say, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, or that a character is not imprinted by the ordination, or that he who has once been a priest can again become a layman, let him be anathema." (Council of Trent, on Sacrament of Order, Canon IV.)

The word "ordination," "ordain," "orders" is not of Scripture origin. An *ordo* was a rank or class of Roman citizens. The term was applied, for example, to a council to which the administration of a city or a colony was committed. To "ordain" (*ordinare*) was to appoint to a civil office. The early Latin fathers used the word as a part of their ecclesiastic vocabulary, and, there is every reason to believe, in a sense corresponding to its political meaning—that, namely, of simple appointment to office. To ascribe to it in their writings the sacramental idea of the impartation of special grace would be an anachronism.

facts or interpretation of apostolic teaching and example can it be so regarded. It is not a mere succession of adaptations that here appears, as of a plant which, changing with a changing environment, while the law of its life remains absolutely the same, is able to adapt itself to a new habitat. Nor is it a simple genuine growth, such as the lapse of time may be expected to record in any resourceful society, whose later stages must of necessity present a very different appearance from its beginnings—a case of root and blossom, of promise and fulfillment.¹ Neither is it a mere hardening of aspiration and divine communion into ecclesiasticism—the formation of a gritty shell for the protection of the kernel of truth within. None of these. Not a series of adaptations, but compromise and deterioration; not growth, but excrescence; not self-protection from threatening evils without, but shriveling and decay within. Instead of coöperative brotherhood, a hierarchy; instead of the law of liberty, either paternal or egoistic despotism.

Yet we are told that all this, or at least a great part of it, may be regarded as not only inevitable but reasonable and right. "Try as you may"—there are those who thus speak—"you will never get the oak back into the acorn. Neither coaxing nor shrewd management nor violence will be of any avail. Nature forbids. And so also is the Church—the Church of our own time as compared with the more primitive organization of its earliest years." Shall we not listen sympathetically to such an argument? It is indeed a true parable, and all that seems to be needed is the true interpretation thereof. Suppose, then, that the tree which started from the acorn should prove to be but a scrub oak or a bulky but diseased and disfigured oak, or for some reason unworthy to be called an oak at all. "An enemy hath done this."

The departing Son of God gave assurance to the congregation

¹"For what every being is in its perfect state, that certainly is the nature of that being. . . . Its own final cause and its end must be the perfection of anything." (Aristotle, "Politics," Bk. I., c. 2.)

of his disciples that they might have the perpetual leadership of the Holy Spirit. "That He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth." And now if it be asked how the well-nigh universal Christian congregation could have gone so far astray in anti-Christian forms and ideas, the one sufficient negative answer must be: By not knowing the leadership of that "Holy Spirit of promise." For as it was through Pentecost that the Church of Christ was called into actual existence, so it is only through the perpetual illumination of the Spirit that its purity can be preserved and its heritage of power realized.

The first Christian communities lived and walked in the Spirit. As flawless men and women? Alas, no; and yet predominantly as genuine Christian disciples. But when the doors of the house of God were thrown wide open, and all men were brought by baptism into its membership, and kept there as partakers of its sacraments and subjects of its authority to the end of life, it came to be composed chiefly of those who did not live under the tuition of the Spirit. Therefore, they did not want to think and act for themselves as God's coworkers in the furtherance of his kingdom. They did not choose to put on the whole armor of God and "fight the good fight of faith." They were ready to engage substitutes—as if in this war there could be a substitute.

In the civil community such a spirit is known as a relaxation of that eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty; in the Church it made an opportunity, eagerly embraced by ambition or a bedwarfing paternalism, for the priest, the prelate, and the pope. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and *my people love to have it so.*"¹

Let it be remembered also that to follow Christ is a very high ideal. It is easy enough to be religious—the formalist or ritualist in any age has set himself no excessively strenuous task. But to be a Christian is to live by faith, in the spirit of love, and in communion with the Father in heaven. It is to deny the mas-

¹Jeremiah v. 30, 31.

tership of self. It is to have the spiritual mind. And what more could life at its highest demand?

An American savage, brought into touch with civilization, declared: "It costs too much to be a white man." Here was a typical instance. The savage did not want to live like a dog. He would be a man. He must have a wigwam, a fire, some cooking utensils, some rude clothing, some weapons, a patch of maize. But as to the civilized life, that seemed far too high for his endeavors. It was a weariness. Its realization cost too much in labor of hand and brain. He would be let alone, therefore, in dull satisfaction with his low estate. Similarly men in all social and political conditions would be religious. They would not live wholly for the visible and the sensuous. They would pay some homage to the supreme Being. They would practice certain rites of worship, and indulge the hope, each according to his kind, of a happy immortality. But when the religion of the Spirit is set before them, its cost seems singularly heavy and its attainment too lofty an ideal. Why keep striving after the transcendent and divine? Thus the temptation is very powerful to drop down from even the contemplation of a truly Christian life to the plane of mere religious observances.

Behold the opportunity of the prophet, if he should appear, to stir the inmost deeps of the spirit and bring the man into conscious contact with the living God. But here is also the opportunity of the priest, who is very likely to appear, standing between God and the people and delivering to them such an external and second-hand religion as may satisfy the unspiritual mind.

In what may be called the historic churches the prelatic and sacerdotal conception of the Christian ministry is still either dominant or strongly influential. And in the East little or nothing has been added to it since the fourth century. Not so, however, in the West. For here prelacy has reached its culmination in papacy, and the claim of the priesthood in authoritative absolutism and the unequivocally defined mock miracle of transubstantiation.

In Protestantism, which under its infelicitous negative name represents the truer Catholicism, the original idea has been recovered. The Christian congregation is recognized as possessing within itself, through the grace and headship of Christ, all spiritual and ecclesiastic powers. It is the Church of God—in that local congregation. It may preach and teach, administer sacraments, adopt rules and regulations for its own government, elect and dismiss members. When it does these things through its officers, it is as a matter of order and not of inherent difference in spiritual or ecclesiastic power between the officer and the people. The gift and calling of the minister of the gospel is of the Divine Spirit, and the badge of his office is not lordship, but service. The universal priesthood of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ leaves no standing ground for offering salvation through penance and the mechanical operation of sacraments. The priest, therefore, is worse than unneeded and unknown—as in the New Testament.

III.

SERVICE: THE DEACON—HIS EARLIER OFFICE.

THERE are some closely related fundamental truths which it may not be amiss, before going further, to repeat, even at the risk of irksome iteration, as plainly as possible.

1. A church, in the New Testament sense, is a Christian congregation, whether organized or not. True, in all ordinary circumstances it will express itself ere long in some kind of organization, as a matter of well-being. Duty and love will unitedly constrain it to do so. But it may exist as a church, in the form of a simple congregation, before ever it possesses an officer or a polity of any kind.

2. Any church, however small, has the divine right to do, according to the wisdom given it, what any other church, or any particular number of associated churches, or the churches of the whole world collectively, have the right to do. That is to say, it may expound the Scriptures, preach the gospel, administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, ordain officers, admit and expel members, undertake Christian enterprises, as it may deem most conducive to the advancement of the kingdom of God.

If, for example, a few pagans in some far-off isle of the sea should somehow find a book or hear a sermon by an itinerant evangelist which proved to be the means of their conversion and their instruction in Christian doctrine, they might gather themselves together and do all these things without violating any law of Christ. They not only might but ought to do such things. To deny them this power—till, let us say, they were brought into some sort of tactual or other connection with a historic body of Christians—would be unscriptural and unjust.

(3) Any local church may, if it will, decide to do any or all of these things through a self-perpetuating body—such as a Quarterly Conference—or through the coöperation and approval of some outside ecclesiastical authority—such as a Presbytery or

General Convention or Synod or Bishop. For this acting through representatives is also a part of the liberty with which Christ has made his people free; and to forbid the use of this liberty would be to impose a gratuitous yoke of bondage.

(4) The officers of a church do not differ, as to the possession of spiritual powers, from the people. No form of ordination makes any difference in this respect. When, for example, ordained ministers teach or preach or administer sacraments or preside in a business meeting or pronounce a benediction, we have no reason to believe that any spiritual influence attends their ministrations that might not attend the like ministrations at the hands of unordained ministers—as in the apostolic churches.

(5) When a church's organization is spoken of, it is not simply what are commonly known as ministerial offices—such as that of teaching elders or of bishops—or the offices of lay deacons and elders, that are meant. But all lay organization is included—the offices of a Sunday school, of a missionary society, of a young people's society, of trustees, of a visiting committee, of a sexton, or whatever others there may be. Let no church member imagine, in a spirit of self-depreciation, that because he is not some other he is not a part of the organization. "If the foot shall say, 'Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body,' is it not therefore of the body?"

So, then, a complete treatise on organized Christianity would take account of all these forms of official service—those of ministers and people alike. For ministers and people, all together, constitute a church; all alike have their ministries to fulfill; all alike are, or ought to be, organized—after the analogy of an army or an industrial undertaking—for Christian service. On the part of the minister habitual activity, on the part of the people habitual passivity, is a sacerdotal and not a New Testament idea or practice.

If now it should be asked why in the present volume lay organization is only touched incidentally—such topics as Sunday Schools, Missionary Societies, and the like receiving no specific

discussion—the answer would be that the offices selected for treatment seem sufficient to illustrate the ideas of church organization, and lack of space forbids further enlargement.¹

Or if it should be asked why, under the broad title of “Christianity as Organized,” only the organization of churches should be treated, and not that of such societies auxiliary to the Church, as the Young Men’s Christian Association or the Salvation Army, a similar answer might be given.

I. THE MOST CHARACTERISTIC OFFICE OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY.

The most characteristic office in the early Church was the diaconate. It would have been easy to find, both in civil governments and in voluntary societies, offices corresponding to that of presbyter and that of bishop in Christian congregations. But it would not have been equally easy to find an office corresponding to that of deacon. Accordingly it may be noted that, while the names *presbyter* and *bishop* were titles already in use as technical terms, either among Jews or Greeks, the name *deacon* was not a title already thus in use. On the contrary, it was a common term, which was taken up by the Church and used technically.

The explanation is not far to seek. Christianity is embodied in fellow-workers. The Church is for service. It is her mission in the world to do good of the highest kind and in the largest measure. Of no other institution can this be asserted with the same breadth and depth of meaning. Standing alone as the institutional representative of the kingdom of heaven on earth, quite out of comparison with all other beneficent societies, is the Congregation of Jesus the Christ. Therefore, as we have seen, among the formative official ideas of the Church is that of service. But in this one particular office the idea so predominates

¹Those topics are treated in “The Idea of the Church,” an introductory volume to the present treatise, under such titles as “The Fellowship of Work” and “The Constitutional Forward Movement.”

that it has given the name to the office itself—both creating and naming the diaconate.

Whence came the spirit and ideal of service in the Christian community, no one can fail to discover. At the very beginning it was made supremely real in the person of the ministering Saviour. Was it not one of his own vivid and unequivocal words, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth (ὁ διακόνων)?" The Master was a minister, the Lord of the soul the servant of all. So far, then, as Christians became Christly, theirs too must be a lifelong ministry of loving service. This was shown in the ministry of the word. Like their Lord, they offered to men that bread of truth by which alone the soul can live. It was a "ministration (διακονία) of righteousness," "of the Spirit," "of a new covenant." But this was not all; Jesus's ministry was also to the body. He was healer to the diseased, bread-giver to the hungry. See the Ruler with the heart of a servant, on the evening before he shall lay down his life on the cross, uttering that discourse which is "one long unfolding of the inner nature of the Church," and now, fully conscious that he came from God and is going to God, bending, towel-girded, over the feet of men who are capable of forsaking or denying him. It was both a real and a symbolic service. It was the royal law personalized in its matchless example, the King of men.¹

Nor did Jesus's ministry to physical needs, with its always accompanying ministration of wisdom and truth, cease with the Resurrection. It was the Risen One who asked on the lake shore in Galilee, "Children, have ye aught to eat?" and had a fire of coals there and the morning meal ready for his hungry and wonder-stricken disciples; and it was he himself, the Man of Galilee now declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, that "cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise."² Utterly shattered lay the dream of a warrior Christ. Jesus was Christ, and the weapons of his warfare were spiritual truth, sympathy, self-sacrifice, service.

¹John xiii. 14, 15.

²John xxi. 9-13.

2. BENEFICENCE IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

Jesus' like-minded disciples, therefore, would find it in their hearts to attend upon the bodily wants of their fellows; "the ministry of tables" would take its place, a subordinate but indispensable place, in connection with "the ministry of the word." Under the very glories of Pentecost we find the disciples making provision for the poor, disposing of possessions and goods and distributing the proceeds to all, "according as any man had need."¹ The first sin that mars the fair record of Christian life in the city where Jesus, betrayed by the avaricious treasurer of his own little company of Apostles, had given himself up to crucifixion, was untruthfulness about a certain contribution of money.² The first church officers elected were a board of finance.³ The first mention of presbyters in the New Testament history is in connection with their receiving from Antioch contributions to be distributed among the destitute Christians in Judæa—an interesting and suggestive coincidence, if nothing more.⁴

All this was in Jerusalem. And indeed the need of beneficence there was very great. Because for one thing such was the attractiveness of the Holy City to the Jews dispersed throughout the world that they kept returning to it and making it their home, either temporarily or permanently, beyond its power to yield a support. The surrounding country was infertile, and the resources of the city itself by no means affluent. Hence "the poor saints in Jerusalem" of whom we read in the New Testament. It afforded the Apostle of the Gentiles a peculiar joy to gather contributions in Europe, and convey them by his own hand to his needy fellow-Israelites in the city of their fathers.⁵

But Jerusalem was not the only city where the conditions of life tended strongly toward increase of poverty. Equally adverse conditions obtained far and wide in the Roman Empire. Not as a fretful and threadbare complaint, but in sheer reality,

¹Acts ii. 45.²Acts v. 1-11.³Acts vi. 1-6.⁴Acts xi. 27-30.⁵Acts xxiv. 17; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4; 2 Cor. ix.

it might have been said that the times were hard. In many instances the government, both imperial and municipal, had to make provision for the helpless and suffering poor. In the city of Rome a regular and long-continued distribution of bread became necessary. Private beneficence also was loudly called for, and it did not always disregard the call. Charitable associations were formed; charitable bequests were made.¹

Here, too, there was a cause of poverty due to the profession of Christianity itself—namely, the giving up of what were now condemned as sinful means of gaining a livelihood. Such, for example, were employments connected with the worship of idols. These and all immoral occupations the followers of Christ must forego.

Accordingly as Christian churches were organized here and there, chiefly among the poor, one of the very first demands upon them was to feed the hungry. Hospitality became a conspicuous virtue.²

The table of the Lord was the table of a common meal, a love feast, at which the necessities of those who had little or nothing were to be supplied.³ Nor did the practice of systematic beneficence in Christ's name pass away with the purer and more primitive years of Christianity. "It is a scandal," said the Em-

¹"The world never needed charity and compassion as it did in the centuries just following Christ. . . . Knavish taxgatherers, peculating officials, and local 'rings' plundered the money which was wrung from the half-starved farmers. . . . Vast masses of *proletaires* were gathered in the cities, especially in the imperial capital; and poverty, orphanage, abandonment of children, with widespread pauperism, prevailed as they have scarcely ever been known in the history of the world." (Brace, *Gesta Christi*, pp. 96, 97. Cf. Hatch, "Organization of the Early Christian Churches," pp. 32, 33.)

²Rom. xii. 13; xvi. 23; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 9.

The earliest of the Fathers, Clement of Rome, couples faith and hospitality, and again faith and godliness, as conditions of the Divine favor: "On account of his [Abraham's] faith and hospitality, a son was given him in his old age. . . . On account of his hospitality and godliness, Lot was saved out of Sodom." ("To the Corinthians," 10, 11.)

³1 Cor. xi. 20-22.

peror Julian, "that the Galileans should support the destitute, not only of their religion, but of ours."

As to the care of widowhood, it was undertaken as a distinct concern of the Church. This, it will be remembered, gave rise to that first board of finance, the Seven in Jerusalem. Later there was instituted in the city of Ephesus a roll of widows which likewise illustrated the kindness, and the common sense also, of early Christianity. To be entered upon this roll was to be entitled to the systematic almsgiving of the church. But the beneficiaries must be "widows indeed;" which is to say, dependently poor, at least sixty years of age, and without children, grandchildren, or other near relatives under natural obligation to provide for their support and able to do so. They must also have had but one husband (*ἐνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή*). Nor was this all. These Christian widows were to be *Christians* indeed. Their previous life must have shown them to have been hospitable in their homes to visiting Christians and strangers, and well reported of as diligent in all good works.¹

Now it is not to be supposed, we may be sure, that only such as these would be kindly ministered to by the church. But no others were to be admitted into this special class of beneficiaries.² The door of entrance into it must be opened and shut, not thrown down. For corporate charity, unguarded from abuse, may easily become promotive of individual idleness or stinginess—a perversion against which church funds, like any other,

¹1 Tim. v. 3-16.

²"It brings before our eyes not merely that far-off primitive Christian church of Ephesus, but also the present work of a Scottish country kirk-session. When the bread-winner dies careful inquiries are to be made, whether the bereaved widow and orphans have any means of support, or can receive any aid from their relations, who are to be stirred up to do their duty to those who are left helpless. If the children or grandchildren are able to work, they are commanded to support her who has been left a widow; but if such help fails, and if the widow is too old to earn her own living and has always borne a good character, then she is placed on the poor roll of the congregation and supported by the community." (Lindsay, "Church and Ministry," p. 148.)

need protection. Nor is there conflict, but, contrariwise, many points of friendly contact, between love and wisdom, kindness and criticism, Christianity and common sense. The wise and great-hearted Apostle who bade one Christian congregation see that they abounded in the grace of liberal ministration toward their needy brethren¹ reminded another: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat."²

3. THE CHURCH NOT DISTINCTIVELY FOR THE RELIEF OF POOR.

Furthermore it is not to be supposed that the Church was then, or is ever to be, distinctively a society for the relief of the poor. Many unsympathetic observers in the present day would seem to regard it as such; for the bitter charges of uselessness which they make against the Church are based almost wholly upon its alleged lack of sympathy with the wage-earner. But such a conception is so far below the truth as to be a serious misconception. They would make Christianity, in its organic form, what the people would at one time have made the Christ—a bread-king.³ But Christ would be followed as Saviour and Lord, not as dispenser of loaves. His Church, likewise, is the society for saving men, whatever their outward circumstances, and lifting them up into that eternal life which he came to give. It is to awaken and satisfy the sense of their spiritual needs. It is to win them unto the worship of God and the habitual doing of his will. The changed heart, with the consequent changed life, is its work in the world. Would any one say that ministration to the physical wants of the poor was the supreme or distinctive object of the life of Jesus? Neither is it the supreme or

¹2 Cor. viii. 7.

²2 Thess. iii. 10.

Cf. the earliest Christian manual: "If he [the stranger] will take up his abode with you and is an artisan, let him work and so eat; but if he has no trade, provide employment for him, that no idler live with you as a Christian. But if he will not act according to this, he is a Christ-trafficker. Beware of such." (Didache, c. 12.)

³John vi. 13-15.

distinctive object of the Church, which is his body, wherewith he would continue his ministry to men.

Outside critics inquire freely as to the use of the Church, the particular ages of the world to which it seems adapted, and its promise of perpetuity. Very well; let us ask the same questions of all other great and enduring institutions—of such, for instance, as the civil government and the school. These institutions rest, each and all, upon some imperative human need. Men are so made as to require protection for their persons and property, and concerted action for the promotion of various material interests. Hence the fact of civil government. They are so made as to require knowledge and instruction. Hence the fact of the school. But just as truly are they so made as to require moral and religious guidance, teaching, reconstruction. Under every sky men are sinners needing release from their sins, they are spirits needing spiritual development. *Hence the fact of the Church.*

Looking at the Church, then, from the purely human point of view, we find it resting on a universal need of humanity. Here, indeed, is not a bodily, nor a civil, nor an intellectual, but a spiritual need—more deeply human than any other. And it is this truth that must give direction to all inquiries as to the Church's fidelity or unfaithfulness, its success or failure. Were it a question of an almshouse or a hospital, the demand for the institution would be measured by the necessities of our flesh and blood. But when the question is that of organized Christianity, another standard of measurement is called for.

Suppose the brightest dream of socialism realized. Poverty is annihilated. The overdriven and underpaid laborer is no more to be seen. The best medical and surgical skill is freely at the service of everybody. Music, art, literature open their doors wide to whoever may choose to enter. Neither wars nor rumors of wars are any longer heard—the once honored military school is remembered with a blush of shame. Men have learned at last to form a universal brotherhood, and by substituting collective for individual economic endeavor, to provide abundant

wealth, together with abundant rest and leisure, for all. The development of the hitherto untouched riches of field and mine, earth and air, sunlight, ocean, electricity, ether, and their application to the supply of human needs goes on to its far-away brilliant conclusion. Science and industrial art have wrought their last beneficent miracle. Farewell to drudgery. The world's physical work is done not by muscle, whether human or sub-human, but by the forces of nature, with man as director—immeasurable cosmic force under the guidance of intelligent will.

What then? Would men be satisfied? would their sins depart with their poverty? would they care for no other life and no other good? On the contrary, as strongly as ever since the beginning of the world the spirit would cry out for the living God. As deeply and as universally as ever the Church's message of eternal life in Christ, and all her means of spiritual culture, would be needed. For "it is written" where no man's hand, one's own or another, can erase it: "Man shall not live by bread alone."

We should only fall into exaggeration, therefore, to assert, with a noble Christian teacher of the present day, that "it might almost be said that the Christian Church was organized for the care of the poor."¹ Nevertheless care for the poor, or, to speak somewhat more broadly, friendly ministration to the afflicted, is a most conspicuous feature of the work of Christ's Church in our sorrow-stricken world. And wherever this feature does not appear, there an indispensable evidence of the Christianity of the heart is lacking.

4. THE RISE OF THE DEACON TO HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.

It is not a matter of surprise, then, that a class of officers should arise in the churches everywhere, charged with the duty of beneficent financial administration—that the Christian diac-

¹Gladden, "The Christian Pastor," p. 448.

onate should appear. It would rather have been matter of surprise if such officers had not arisen.

The word *deacon* in its Greek form (*διάκονος*) is freely used in the sense of servant or attendant, both in classic literature and in the New Testament.¹ In the New Testament it is given to household servants, as, for instance, in the narrative of the wedding in Cana—"But the servants (*δῆκονοι*) that had drawn the water knew;"² to Christian ministers in general, as in Paul's exhortation with the schismatic Corinthians—"What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers (*δῆκονοι*) through whom ye believed;"³ and even to civil rulers—"For he is a minister (*διάκονος*) of God to thee for good."⁴ So, not only Timothy, Paul, Apollos, Tychicus, and Epaphras, but Roman magistrates also are called deacons.

Our Lord himself, coming into the world as he did, "not to be ministered unto but to minister (*διακονῆσαι*)," is called by the Apostle Paul a *διάκονος* to confirm the truth of God to Israel and to show forth his mercy to the other peoples.⁵

This, therefore, was the common term which, through a process of specialization such as one may see going on at any time in any language, was fixed instinctively upon a certain class, or order, of church officers. So they were called, not in a general sense but technically, deacons.⁶

What, then, were the deacon's official duties? To such a question the New Testament, strange as it might seem, offers no

¹It also occurs a few times, and in the same sense, in the Septuagint; as, for example, in Esther ii. 2: "Then said the king's servants that ministered (*οἱ δῆκονοι*) unto him." (See also ch. i. 10 and ch. vi. 3.)

²John ii. 9.

"The primary meaning of *διάκονος*, as it meets us in Greek literature generally, is a servant or slave in the household, whose chief duty consists in waiting on his master at table, and sometimes in marketing for him." (Hort, "The Christian Ecclesia," p. 202.) It is one of the words that the gospel has glorified.

³1 Cor. iii. 5.

⁴Rom. xiii. 4. See also 1 Thess. iii. 2; Eph. vi. 21; Col. i. 7.

⁵Rom. xv. 8.

⁶Phil. i. 1: 1 Tim. iii. 8.

direct answer. Certain qualifications for the office are, indeed, enumerated in a pastoral epistle: Deacons must be grave, sincere in speech, temperate, not avaricious, firm in conscientious conviction of Christian truth, pure and blameless in life, "ruling their children and their own houses well."¹ But these qualifications, it will be noticed, are not official but purely personal. They show what a man who is a deacon must *be*, not at all what a deacon must *do*. They are also spiritual, not intellectual. There is none of them but is wholly applicable to the private Christian; there is none that offers the slightest positive hint as to the functions of the diaconate. They offer only this negative suggestion: In the description of the good deacon, as here given, no mention is made of either teaching or oversight, whereas in the corresponding description of the good presbyter, or bishop,² these two duties are mentioned. Thus it is at least fairly suggested that the deacon's office was not one either of teaching or of oversight.

But it may be that some light is thrown upon the subject by that election of church officers narrated in the sixth chapter of the Acts. Let us then recall the familiar story. Not long after the Day of Pentecost—perhaps a few months only—complaints began to be heard in the church at Jerusalem of a lack of consideration for the widows of Greek-speaking Jews as compared with those of Palestinian Jews, in "the daily ministration"—the distribution of money or food, or perhaps of both. The dissatisfaction was probably without just cause; for the distribution had been made by the Apostles themselves, and we cannot believe it likely that they were actuated by even an unconscious spirit of favoritism. But, however this may have been, action was taken, at the suggestion of the Apostles, to quiet the complaints. Seven men, of the very best in the church—and somewhat probably, as their Greek names suggest, of the Greek-speaking people—were chosen to attend to this matter of the

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 8-12.² 1 Tim. iii. 2-7; 1 Pet. v. 2, 3.

distribution of the common fund.¹ Now if in their appointment we are to find the origin of the Christian diaconate, it is clear that originally this office had to do with monetary affairs. It was a service of "tables." More specifically it was a service of the table of the poor—such as among the Wesleyans of to-day, for illustration, is assigned to the "poor-steward."

Indeed, if these men were deacons in the sense in which the word was afterwards technically used, then the diaconate antedates the presbyterate; and we have here an account of the institution of the oldest permanent office in the Christian Church. But is it so? The question, though affecting no vital interest of ecclesiastic polity, has been repeatedly discussed. And the fairly estimated result of the argument *pro* and *con* is, that the historic continuity of the office or the Seven with that of the later-mentioned deacons has not been proved.

In favor of the identity of the two offices, it has been held (1) that the appointment is narrated with a directness and a fullness of detail that suggest the creation of a new and important institution of the Church; (2) that the office is called a ministering (*διακονία*, v. 1); (3) that it was believed in post-apostolic times that these men were the first deacons—so that, for example, in the city of Rome and in some other cities the number of deacons was limited to seven, as it was also by the Council of Neocæsarea (315),² in imitation of what was supposed to be apostolic example; (4) that the duties of the office were essentially the same as those of the post-apostolic diaconate.

In reply it has been urged (1) that the significance of this appointment with reference to the common treasury of the church in Jerusalem at the time, to the wise arrest of the first threatening schism, to the relieving of the Apostles of immediate

¹Acts vi. 1-6.

The number was determined probably by its significance as the symbol of completeness. (Cf. Rev. i. 4, 12, 16, 20; iv. 5, and other passages.)

²"The deacons ought to be seven in number, according to the canon, even if the city be great. Of this you will be persuaded from the book of Acts." (Canon XV.)

financial oversight in order that they might be free to employ themselves exclusively in their proper work, and to the introduction of Stephen as the first Christian martyr and the precursor of the Apostle to the Gentiles—that these considerations are sufficient in themselves to account for the space allotted to this appointment in the New Testament narrative; (2) that the appointees are nowhere called deacons, but are referred to in the twenty-first chapter of the Acts as simply “the Seven,” and as to their *ministering* (*διακονία*), the word is evidently used in an untechnical sense, just as the same word is used in this very chapter with reference to the Apostles themselves (v. 4); (3) that post-apostolic opinion on such a point is of uncertain value; (4) that the pressing need for some such office in Jerusalem and elsewhere may account for its earlier and local, as well as its later and general, appearance, without the supposition of any historic connection between the two.¹

But may not the appointment of the Seven be regarded as at least a precedent for the formal institution of the diaconate?² If so, it is still unquestionable that this later and universal office was from the first a ministry of money. If not, we might turn toward the light that is thrown back upon the New Testa-

¹Chrysostom regards the office of the Seven as altogether local and temporary: “Whence I think it clearly and manifestly follows that neither deacons nor presbyters is their designation; but it was for this particular reason they were ordained.” (Homily on Acts, *in loco*.)

Some scholars of the present day—for example, Dr. Lindsay (in “The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries,” p. 116)—are inclined to identify the Seven with the presbyters mentioned in Acts xi., an opinion which Hort (“The Christian Ecclesia,” p. 62) regards as “a very improbable hypothesis.”

Cf. Weiss, “Biblical Theology of the New Testament” (E. T.), Vol. I., p. 189.

²“There is of course no evidence for historic continuity between the Seven and either the Ephesian *διάκονοι* or the developed order of deacons in later times. The New Testament gives not the slightest intimation of such a connection. But the Seven at Jerusalem would of course be well known to St. Paul and to many others outside Palestine, and it would not be strange if the idea propagated itself.” (Hort, “The Christian Ecclesia,” p. 209.)

ment diaconate from the post-apostolic age—which we will do forthwith.

5. THE DIACONATE IN THE POST-APOSTOLIC AGE.

In the earliest post-apostolic literature—such as the Epistle of Clement of Rome, the Didache, the Pastor of Hermas, the Epistles of Ignatius and that of Polycarp—the deacon is mentioned, and, as in 1 Timothy, blamelessness of character and life is required of him; but nothing is said as to his duties. Apparently these were too well known to need mention. Probably the nearest approach to information concerning them may be found in the Pastor of Hermas, where deacons are spoken of who “plundered widows and orphans of their livelihood, and gained possessions for themselves by their ministry.”¹ Here at least is an intimation that their office had to do with money contributed for the support of widows and orphans. A century later, Cyprian of Carthage tells of Nicostratus, an unfaithful deacon, who had “abstracted the Church’s money by a sacrilegious fraud, and devoured the deposits of the widows and orphans.”² Jerome also speaks of the deacon somewhat disparagingly—in comparison with the presbyter—as a “mere server of tables and of widows.”³ In the early days of Christianity, therefore, the deacon’s office, it is plainly implied, had to do with the Church’s money. And unhappily this sacred treasure was sometimes intrusted to thievish hands, as in the later and the present time.

We have seen that the qualifications for the diaconate, as depicted in the first letter to Timothy, are moral and spiritual. They are also, let us now observe, fully as great as those required for the higher office of presbyter, or bishop⁴—indeed, essentially the same.⁵ So, after the enumeration of the presbyter-bishop’s qualifications, the Apostle adds, “Deacons *in like manner* must be grave,”⁶ and so on. Even more noteworthy is the description of the men who, under the advice of the Apostles, were

¹Sim. ix. 26.

²Epistle XLVIII. (LII.).

³In his Epistle to Evangelus.

⁴1 Tim. iii. 1-7.

⁵Titus i. 5-8.

⁶1 Tim. iii. 8-12.

to be chosen for the ministry of the money table in Jerusalem: "Look ye out, therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."¹ And the first mentioned of these appointees, Stephen, is described as "a man full of faith and full of the Holy Spirit."

Of the same general character were the qualifications for the diaconate in post-apostolic times. The Didache says: "Appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek and not avaricious, and upright and proved" (c. xv.)—no difference being recognized as to the moral qualities needed in the two offices. Polycarp says: "In like manner should the deacons be blameless before the face of His righteousness, as being the servants of God and Christ, and not of men. They must not be slanderers, double-tongued, or lovers of money, but temperate in all things, compassionate, industrious, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the servant of all."² So generally in the Christian writings of those times the diaconate is distinctly recognized, in its outward activity, as a lower office than the presbyterate, and of course lower than the single episcopate, when this office arose; but as to the required spiritual character of the incumbent, equal to either of them. Outwardly inferior, it was inwardly one and the same.

6. WHY SUCH HIGH QUALIFICATIONS?

Will any one ask, Why such high spiritual qualities for what seems to have been not only a very simple but even a semi-secular business? Because in Christianity—that is to say, according to the innermost truth of life—nothing is secular, but every human interest stands disclosed in its ideal sacredness. Money is a means of the communion of saints. Giving and receiving is an ordinance of Christian love. A "grace" and a "fellowship" (*κοινωνία*) it is called by the Apostle of the Gentiles

¹Acts vi. 3.

²To the Philippians, c. 5.

when gathering gifts of money for Jews.¹ Buying and selling is as truly a moral as an economic interchange. The finances of the Church may be so conducted—with such equity, wisdom, Christlike kindness—as to make them a spiritual power. Lucre, which is so often “filthy” that the word is commonly used in that ill sense, becomes in the hands of honesty entirely clean, and in the hands of benevolence powerful for good. “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah of hosts.” Verily “money may always be a beautiful thing; it is we who make it grimy.”

We have already been led to lay emphasis upon the fact that the ministration of the Church is distinctively not to the body but to the spirit. And we are now reminded that this very ministration to the spirit may be made by means of material things—through giving food, through the good and right use of money.

But let us, lingering a little upon this truth, turn to the passage itself in 2 Corinthians, in which giving is called a “grace.” Or rather let us turn to the two whole chapters, the eighth and the ninth; for this is the one subject of them both. To give money, by taking part in a collection for poor Christians—can we imagine how it could be named with greater affluence of spiritual significance than to be called a “grace” (*χάρις*)? It is the word which the Apostle applies in this same connection to our Lord’s giving of the treasures of his own truth and glory for the enrichment of his people: “Ye know the *grace* (*χάρις*) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.”² A Christian use of money, then—what is it? A recognition of common kindly human relationships, and nothing more? It is an expression of God’s *grace* in the heart. It shows a spirit of good will that may be called by the same name as that grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—though the difference of its greatness

¹2 Cor. viii. 4.

²ch. viii. 9.

in him and in us is no less than infinite—which was shown in his own self-giving to the world.

But here is something else to be noted. Paul reminds the Corinthians that these gifts of money about which he is writing are not to be conveyed by himself alone to the needy Christians in Jerusalem. On the contrary, the various contributing churches have, with his coöperation, appointed certain brethren—Luke, Trophimus, and others perhaps—to go with him as joint conveyers of the money.

Why so? In order to avoid, as far as possible, all occasion of insinuation or suspicion, on the part of Paul's enemies, as to his fair dealing in this matter. If he alone should handle the money, they who were accusing him already of this or that evil-doing might accuse him—absurd as it would now seem to all the world—of gathering it professedly for the poor but really to be appropriated, at least in part, to his own personal use. Now such a slander must, if possible, be avoided. For it behooves the Church to "take thought for things honorable not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men;" and in the early centuries, as now in our own, one of the commonest sins was the misuse of money. In the early centuries, as now in our own, therefore, one of the commonest suspicions of untrustworthy character was that a man had acted dishonestly with other people's money placed in his hands. Let the Church, then, be careful to avoid all occasion for such suspicions. For it must take thought for honorableness even "in the sight of men." Paul himself would have its good reputation, as intrusted to his keeping, safeguarded by all proper precautions.

Accordingly it was the wisdom of the Church to call for the finest possible Christian character in its financial officers. The deacon must, through the abiding power of the Holy Spirit, live above even the subtlest temptation to dishonesty.

But who are the poor? An answer of early Christianity was, They are God's altar. To give to a widow, an orphan, or the

¹ch. viii. 21.

poor, was to lay an offering upon the altar of God.¹ Whatsoever might be given to them was offered to him. And why should it not have been so conceived of? For these were the classes of needy ones to whom their fellow-Christians must, first of all, do good and communicate; and was it not written, "But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased?"² Blessed above all official celebrants are the priests and priestesses who minister at this ancient altar of God which "ye have always with you."

Besides, in ministries to the physical needs of men the opportunity is constantly afforded to speak directly to the life of the conscience and the heart. "Let the deacons going about," says an ancient homily, "look after the bodies *and the souls* of the brethren." No wonder that two of the Seven, Stephen and Philip, are soon found preaching the word with power to the people. Surely the deacon might magnify his office in the name of Jesus, the visiting Healer and Teacher.

7. THROUGH FLESH TO SPIRIT.

Are there those who serve in an office which they can magnify as fittingly in that Name in the Church of to-day? There are those who seek out the most repulsive places of their own land, or even go to the ends of the world, to do such twofold service. The pitiful cry of human need will not let them rest at home. Who then are these Christian men and women? Waving them farewell from the shores of their native land, do we possess enough of their spirit to understand it? The typical arm-chair critic does not. Or perhaps we have been so absorbed in the consideration of great and beautiful abstract truths, or in ideal-

¹"Knowing that they [the widows] are the altar of God." (Polycarp to Philippians, 4.)

"An orphan who, by reason of his youth, or he that by the feebleness of old age, or the incidence of a disease, or the bringing up of many children, receives alms, such a one shall not only not be blamed but shall be commended; for he shall be esteemed an altar to God." (Apost. Const., Bk. IV., 3.)

²Heb. xiii. 16.

izing men and conditions in the Ancient Catholic Church, as not to see what is directly before our eyes. Some day, it may be, we shall awake to acknowledge with regret: There stood among us those whom we knew not.

The medical missionary may be taken as an illustrative example. His brothers—in China, let us say—are without the knowledge of medicine and surgery. Most of them are miserably poor. They are helplessly suffering by the million with wounds or diseases from which he has the power to bring relief. He goes to heal them. They do not know themselves to be the objects of a Divine love and care. He goes to teach them by the fitly spoken word and by his own life of Christly wisdom and love. There, in the dispensary, the hospital, and the homes of the people, he lives cheerfully, manfully, unselfishly from day to day. In his hand are veritable leaves of healing from the Tree of Life; and men are saved, body and soul.¹

Has the kingdom of God come with power? Is Jesus of Nazareth Christ, or must the Messianic idea still await the time when it shall be made a fact? "Lepers are cleansed, . . . the poor have good tidings preached to them."²

¹"True medical missionary work is evangelical. Our Lord never separated the two, but preached or taught and healed as he went, and so should we. . . .

"The medical missionary has unrivaled opportunities for preaching the gospel; and while he carries the lancet in one hand, he must ever be ready with the sword of the Spirit in the other. . . .

"One very rainy day my wife and I sat down to look into the spiritual history of these inquirers. . . . We were surprised and delighted to find that every one of them came to us as patients. Humanly speaking, these two little churches would never have been started but for that medical work, and we might never have met those Christians, who shortly after were baptized, but for their having some little trouble that required the assistance of a doctor." ("World-Wide Evangelization: Addresses Delivered before the Fourth International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement," pp. 511, 512, 524.)

²Luke vii. 22.

IV.

THE DEACON: HIS LATER AND PRESENT OFFICE.

IF now we ask for direct information as to the duties pertaining to the office of deacon, we shall find that the very earliest given in Christian literature represents him as the bishop's assistant. He is compared to Timothy in attendance upon the apostle Paul, and is even enthusiastically called the bishop's ministering angel. "What are the deacons," asks an early Christian writer, "but imitators of the angelic powers, fulfilling a pure and blameless ministry unto him [the bishop], as the holy Stephen did to the blessed Jesus, Timothy and Linus to Paul, Anencletus and Clement to Peter?"¹ They must report everything to the bishop, and must do nothing without his knowledge and authority. They are called, in still extravagant metaphor, the bishop's eye and ear and mouth and soul.²

I. ASSISTANCE THREEFOLD.

More particularly this assistance rendered by the deacon to the bishop was threefold: First, in the conduct of worship; sec-

¹Ignatius, "To the Trallians" (Longer Recension), 6.

²The bishop and presbyters sat on their "thrones" in the church; the deacons *stood* near them, like the sailors of a ship of which the bishop was commander. (Apost. Const. II., 57.) See also Jerome, "To Evangelus:" "But even in the church of Rome [where the diaconate was exceptionally honored] the deacons stand while the presbyters seat themselves."

"Let him [the deacon] not do anything at all without his bishop." (Apost. Const., Bk. II., 31, 32.)

"Let the deacon refer all things to the bishop. . . . But let him order such things as he is able by himself, receiving power from the bishop. . . . But the weighty matters let the bishop judge; but let the deacon be the bishop's ear and eye and mouth and heart and soul, that the bishop may not be distracted with many cares, but only with such as are more considerable, as Jethro did appoint for Moses, and his counsel was received." (*Ibid.*, Bk. II., 44.)

ondly, in ministration to the poor and the distressed; thirdly, in the exercise of discipline.

(1) The deacon's service in *the conduct of worship* is seen in his connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.¹ For this was the central rite about which all the forms of congregational worship were gathered. The early liturgies that have been transmitted to our day are, without exception, sacramental. Preaching was not referred to in the liturgies, it having already become a fast-diminishing quantity. Meetings for prayer and mutual edification had ceased. The celebration of the Lord's Supper, however, was regular and frequent—every Sunday or oftener. The bishop, or pastor, had charge of the services; but the deacon must also be present as an assistant. It was his part to keep order in the congregation; sometimes to read the Gospel; to arrange the sacramental vessels; to pronounce such liturgic sentences as, "Let us attend in wisdom," "In peace let us pray to the Lord," "Salute ye one another with the holy kiss;" and to distribute the consecrated bread and wine to the communicants.²

(2) It is worth while to note also that *the service of the poor* and the service of the Lord's table, the two chief duties of the deacon in the early churches, were more closely related than might at first sight appear. For it was from the Lord's table that the wants of the poor were supplied—as they had formerly been supplied from the love feast. There the contributions of the people were brought, and thence through the hands of the

¹"And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion." (Justin Martyr, "First Apology," 65.)

Cf. the Form of ordaining Deacons in the Methodist Episcopal Churches: "It appertaineth to the office of a deacon to assist the elder in divine service, and especially when he ministereth the holy communion to help him in the distribution thereof."

²"The Divine Liturgy of James," *passim*.

deacons distributed among the necessitous cases.¹ Worship and service, the reverent heart and the helping hand, were joined together, as in spirit they should always be. Not, however, that the deacon's whole duty to the poor was embraced in the circumspect distribution of what was brought for them to the Lord's table. He must also seek them out for any possible ministration at their homes, or in their homelessness. So he was largely an out-of-doors officer—expected to seek as well as be sought, to take the initiative, to do much personal beneficent work.

(3) But it was not only thus that he became as "eyes to the bishop." A more difficult duty was laid upon him. The deacon must be a *minister of discipline* as well as of food or money. Actively going about, he must observe the conduct of church members, prevent, when possible, the commission of sin, check the disorderly, reporting all things to the bishop.² In a word, he was instructed: "It is your duty who are deacons to visit all who stand in need of visitation."³

It was also the function of a deacon to baptize in the absence

¹Cf. the custom of modern evangelical churches.

"Whilst these sentences are in reading, the deacons, church wardens, or other fit persons appointed for that purpose, shall receive the alms for the poor, and other devotions of the people." (Book of Common Prayer, "Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper.") Note also the same Order in the Methodist Episcopal Churches.

"An offering for the poor or other sacred purpose is appropriate in connection with this service, and may be made at such times as shall be ordered by the session." (Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.)

"It is an almost universal custom among our churches to take a collection at the close [of the administration of the Lord's Supper], 'the offering for the sick and needy,' of which the deacons are the custodians and almoners." (Hiscox, "The New Directory for Baptist Churches," p. 133.)

²"Let the deacons of the church going about with intelligence be as eyes to the bishop, carefully inquiring about the doings of each member of the church, ascertaining who is about to sin, in order that, being arrested by admonition by the president, he may haply not accomplish the sin. Let them check the disorderly." (Clementines, Epist. to James, 12.)

³Apost. Const., Bk. III., 19.

of a presbyter,¹ and with the permission of the bishop to preach²—assisting thus even in the ministry of the word.

2. THE BISHOP'S ADVISER AND DEPUTY.

But ere long the deacons became more than mere helpers or servants of the bishop. They became his advisers, confidants, deputies. Very important missions were intrusted to them. Hence it was not rare for individual deacons to excel their brethren of the next higher order, the presbyterate, in dignity and power. Nor, unhappily, was it rare for jealousies to arise between individual members of the lower and of the higher order.

This advisory and confidential relation of the deacon to the bishop will help to account for a certain special development of the diaconate—for the development of the office of archdeacon. This office was filled from time to time by some of the most highly gifted and influential men of the Church: such as Athanasius in Egypt, the renowned champion of orthodoxy at the Council of Nice; Leo the Great and Hildebrand in Italy, the one "the first pope" and the other a real pope before his election to the papacy; Bossuet in France; and more than one, whose names may be readily recalled, in England. Its origin is not altogether clear. It may be traced back, however, to the fourth century. For a time it seems not to have risen to any great importance; and, in fact, it never did become important in the Eastern Church. Its evolution in the West is what we shall here follow.

The archdeacon, then, seems to have been at first simply the senior deacon, to whom, as having been longest in office, a posi-

¹"Of giving it [baptism] the chief priest (who is the bishop) has the right; in the next place the presbyters and deacons, yet not without the bishop's authority." (Tertullian, "On Baptism," 17.)

Cf. the Form of Ordaining Deacons in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South: "It appertaineth to the office of a deacon . . . in the absence of an elder to baptize." The Methodist Episcopal Church has omitted from this Form of Ordination the words "in the absence of an elder."

²Bingham, "Antiquities," Vol. I., Bk. ii., c. 20, 11.

tion of precedence was accorded. There was no election. Later, he was probably elected by bishop and deacons conjointly. Still later the bishop exercised the exclusive right of appointment.

This chief deacon was charged with the instruction of the other deacons and the inferior clergy in the performance of their duties; and in the course of time, with the examination of candidates for the ministry, as to both literary attainments and personal character. The devotional services of the bishop's church were under his supervision. The church funds were placed in his hands.

There was also developed a rural archdeacon, to whom a certain district of the diocese was assigned. Indeed, while at first there was but one archdeacon to a diocese, after the eighth century there were, in most cases, several.

Nor was it necessary that the archdeacon should be chosen from the ranks of the deacons; for after the ninth century the rural archdeacon was sometimes and the city (or cathedral) archdeacon usually chosen from the presbyters.

But what we have chiefly to observe is that the archdeacon's principal function was to assist the bishop in the administrative affairs of the diocese. He was not only "the bishop's eye and ear and mouth and soul," but also his *hand*; he must govern as well as see and report. He sat in councils as the bishop's representative. Indeed, the archdeacon came to have a jurisdiction of his own, and to rule almost as if we were the supreme ruler of the diocese.¹

He would fain himself have become, in fact if not in name, a bishop. We are reminded of the feudal lords of the Middle Ages, who were prone to ignore the authority of their sovereigns, to whom they were bound in service as vassals, and to reign within their respective territories as independent little

¹"In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the powers of the archdeacon reached their climax. They received a jurisdiction of their own, suspended and excommunicated priests, held synods, and in many ways tried to enlarge their rights at the expense of the bishop." (McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia*, Art. "Archdiaconate.")

kings. Of course what is illustrated in any such case is the not uncommon moral fault of usurpation—the agent assuming the rights of the principal. But the usurping archdeacon was not permitted to have his own way. The church councils brought him back into the proper diaconal relation to the bishop.

In the Church of England the archdeacon has been retained as a prominent and serviceable officer. Like his mediæval prototype, he examines candidates for the ministry, stands very closely related to the bishop, and is charged with a large share of the government and administration of the diocese.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the deacon, notwithstanding his large increase in dignity and power through his association with the bishop, remained simply a minister without any strictly sacerdotal functions. Only the presbyter was a minister transformed into a priest. Yet the deacons might be regarded as on their way to the priesthood; for it was out of their order that the occupants of the higher order of the presbyterate, or priesthood, were selected.¹ The diaconate became thus a stepping-stone to the presbyterate.

It is true that not infrequently the deacon remained a deacon during life, never being ordained a presbyter. And it has continued to be so in the Orthodox Eastern Church to the present day. Here the curates of parishes are in many instances life-long deacons.

Usually, however, the diaconate was an office preparatory to

¹Some have supposed that a reference to this promotion of deacons to the order of presbyters is made in 1 Timothy iii. 13: "For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good *standing*." But the word *βαθμῶς* does not require this interpretation—even if it should admit of it. The evidence seems to show plainly enough that the idea of such a promotion is of later than New Testament origin.

"For those who have been deacons of good report and blameless purchase to themselves the pastorate." ("Sources of the Apostolic Canons," B. 6, Wheatley's Translation.)

See also the prayer at the Ordination of a Deacon: "Do thou render him worthy to discharge acceptably the ministration of a deacon, . . . that thereby he may attain a higher degree." (Apost. Const., VIII., 18.)

the next higher. For as it is well that every business should be entered through an apprenticeship, so is it surely the part of discretion that every difficult and responsible office should be preceded by a period of testing and probation. He who would be made ruler "over five cities" must first be found for a time "faithful in a very little." And as such a period of test and probation for the intending presbyter, the diaconate came to be utilized.

But certain retrogressive changes were also taking place. As to the deacon's share in the exercise of discipline, it became less and less till it finally disappeared. As to the ministration to the poor and the distressed, which seems to have been originally the chief, or even the sole, function of the deacon, we find it also declining in prominence and importance. Because, after the recognition of Christianity by the State and the consequent multiplication of churches, there was less need of such ministration. A broader provision was now made for the needy classes. Asylums for widows, orphans, the aged, the sick, and the poor were formed. Thus the larger part of the most distinctive service rendered in primitive times by the deacon was taken out of his hands.¹

And now let us look back from the view-point which we have reached in the history of the diaconate—say, A.D. 500—and note the chief changes that have occurred. The New Testament office, so far as can be ascertained, was (1) independent as to position, (2) permanent as to tenure, (3) a ministration to the poor as to function. The ecclesiastical office is (1) no longer independent but subsidiary to the episcopate, (2) no longer in the fullest sense permanent but preparatory to the presbyterate, and (3) no longer specially charged with ministration to the poor. But, on the other hand, the deacon attending upon the bishop in various kinds of service is especially charged with a part in the conduct of worship, and in the case of the archdeacon with a part in the administration of episcopal government.

¹Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," pp. 52-54.

The original title has been retained, but almost nothing more. A new office, which we cannot suppose would have been recognized by an Apostle, has arisen under the name of the old.

3. IN THE PRESENT AGE.

This new or transformed office has been prominently perpetuated through the subsequent centuries.

In the Roman Church it is the function of the deacon to accompany the bishop here and there, to attend upon him when preaching, to announce to him the names of catechumens and of candidates for Holy Orders, and to report to him those within his diocese who are living unfaithful lives. He is also to read the Gospel and otherwise assist at the Mass. And in the absence of the bishop he may expound the Gospel, though this is not regarded as one of his ordinary functions.¹

In the two Methodist Episcopal Churches, which in this respect are formed, like the Protestant Episcopal Church, on the model of the Church of England, the deacon is a minister with authority to read and expound the Scriptures in the congregation, to baptize, and to assist in the administration of the Lord's Supper.² After serving in this office for a prescribed time, he is eligible to elders' orders; and, even awaiting this second ordination, he may have charge of a congregation as its pastor. In these four Episcopal churches, therefore, the original financial function of the office has entirely disappeared, the liturgic function has been retained, as in the Church of Rome, and the

¹Donovan, "Catechism of the Council of Trent," p. 219.

²It is true that in these churches the deacon is instructed at ordination that "it is his office to search for the sick, poor, and impotent, that they may be visited and relieved," and is asked: "Will you do this gladly and willingly?" But the charge is appropriate only because of its appropriateness to any Christian pastor. For the opportunity and duty of the elder toward the poor is the same as that of the deacon. It is the office of the "steward," who is also instructed to "seek the needy and distressed in order to relieve them," and in whose hands is placed the money with which the wants of the poor are to be relieved, that in Methodism more specifically represents the apostolic diaconate.

occasional service of preaching has become obligatory and regular.¹

In the Presbyterian, the Congregational, and the Baptist Churches the deacon, keeping much closer to the primitive type, is still chiefly a financial officer. The management of church funds, including the care of the poor, is largely in his hands. In the Congregational and the Baptist Churches he also assists at the Lord's Supper, but simply as a layman; for, as in the Presbyterian Church, he is neither preacher nor pastor.

4. EXTENSION OF THE DIACONATE.

Before passing on to the so-called higher offices of the Church we must take note of a certain extension of the diaconate in two very different directions.

(1) In the second or the third century it was extended so as to include under its general idea of assistance another assistant in the worship and work of the Church. This was the sub-deacon.

It has been surmised, not unreasonably, that the office of sub-deacon arose out of two causes. One cause was the custom that prevailed, at least in some churches—through the mechanical imitation of the New Testament precedent already referred to—of having but seven deacons in a congregation.² In the case of a large congregation—like that of Rome, for example—more than seven were needed; and inasmuch as they could not be had, the sub-diaconate was devised to supply the lack of service. The other cause was a desire on the part of the deacon to get rid of the less “dignified” functions of his office, and thus while ministering to be ministered unto. Neither of which conjectured causes seems able to bear the light of Christ.

¹In the Protestant Episcopal Church it is made the duty of the deacon to “read the Holy Scriptures and the Homilies in the church,” and “to preach if he be admitted thereto by the bishop.” In the Methodist Episcopal Churches, he is admitted “to read and expound the Holy Scriptures.” (See the respective Forms of Ordination.)

²Acts vi. 1-6.

The sub-deacon served as assistant to both the deacon and the priest. To the deacon he brought the paten and the chalice for the Lord's Supper, putting them back in their place after the communion. To the priest he offered water for the ceremonial washing of his hands when officiating. It was also his duty to keep order about the church door, and to give notice at the proper time that all penitents should quit the congregation, and the faithful remain.

(2) The diaconate was extended in the direction of the appointment of woman deacons, which shall be the subject of the next chapter.

Four others of the less prominent officers that appear in the development of the ecclesiastic hierarchy may here also claim a moment's attention—namely, the Acolyte, the Reader, and the Doorkeeper.

The *acolyte*, notwithstanding his Greek name (*ἀκόλουθος*, an attendant), made his appearance in the Latin Church, and seems never to have been introduced into the East. At his ordination two articles were put into his hands by the archdeacon—a pitcher, and a candlestick bearing a lighted taper. These were the symbols of his office, which was chiefly to wait upon the officiating priest with wine for the Lord's Supper, and to light the candles in the church. It was at this lighting of the lamps, in the twilight service, that the beautiful evening hymn that has come down to our own time was sung:

O gladsome light
Of the Father immortal,
And of the celestial,
Sacred, and blessed
Jesus our Saviour!

Now to the sunset
Again hast thou brought us;
And seeing the evening
Twilight, we bless thee,
Praise thee, adore thee.

Father omnipotent!
 Son, the Life-giver!
 Spirit, the Comforter!
 Worthy at all times
 Of worship and wonder.

The *exorcist* was not at first an official in the Church, but any Christian who may have been supposed to possess the gift of casting out evil spirits.¹ In fact, it seems to have been taught by some—by Tertullian, for example²—that all Christians either had or might have this power.

Afterwards, however, the exorcist was a man duly set apart by the bishop, but without the imposition of hands, for the performance of this function. Delivering to the candidate a book in which were the written forms of exorcism, the bishop gave him the charge: "Take and commit to memory, and receive power to lay hands on demoniacs, whether baptized or catechumens."³

So far, then, the exorcist's function might be regarded as having been purely imaginary and vain. Yet it was not wholly so; because it became his duty to pray for the sick and diseased who

¹"An exorcist is not ordained. For it is a trial of voluntary goodness, and of the grace of God through Christ by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For he who has received the gift of healing is declared by revelation from God, the grace which is in him being manifest to all." (Const. Apos., VIII., iii., 26.)

²Arguing against a Christian's serving in the army, he asks: "Shall he diligently protect by night [keeping guard at pagan temples] those who in the daytime he put to flight by his exorcisms?" ("De Corona," 11. See also "Apology," 23.)

Origen may be quoted to the same effect: "For it is not by incantations that Christians seem to prevail [over evil spirits], but by the name of Jesus, accompanied by the announcement of the narratives which relate to him." ("Contra Celsus," Bk. I., c. 6.)

³Cf. the exorcism in the Administration of Public Baptism in the First Prayer Book of King Edward VI. (1549): "I command thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou come out and depart from these infants, whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath vouchsafed to call to his holy baptism, to be made members of his holy body," etc. This exorcism held its place in the Prayer Book for three years only, being omitted in the edition of 1552.

were supposed to be possessed of demons, to *care for them*, and to “heal them, if possible.”

“To *heal them if possible*,” so we have here once more the idea of the healing mission of Christianity. For this may be taken as the real suggestiveness, whatever its accompanying superstitions, of the exorcist’s office. Jesus would have the bearers of his gospel, through all ages as we may believe, to be also health-bearers, “to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.”¹ His churches may be storehouses of health-giving power. It may be so undoubtedly in our own age, through hospitals, through the promotion of medical and surgical science alike in Christendom and heathendom, through private ministration. But more than this: moral sanity will promote physical sanity. “The Elder” prayed for his well-beloved son and host: “That in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”² And the divine law under which soul and body live and act together will ever give its silent Amen to such a prayer. Strengthen the wavering will, lift up the anxious or grovelling thoughts to have faith in God and to dwell upon whatsoever things are just, true, honorable, pure, lovely, of good report, excellent, praiseworthy—and the whole man will be made strong in this joy of the Lord. Worthy of universal acceptance is the ancient witness, that “gladness of heart is the life of a man,” that “envy and wrath shorten a man’s days and care bringeth old age before the time.”³ Nor was it a mere sick man’s whim, when a sufferer from nervous disorder said: “Prove to me that God loves me, and I will leave this place a well man.”

While, therefore, the Church in its ministry of healing may not be authorized to say to the sick or diseased, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk,” it may bring them health through prayer in Jesus Christ’s name; and, moreover, by the way of the conscious and regnant soul it may convey healing virtue even to the unconscious bodily organism. In which facts

¹Luke ix. 2.

²3 John 2.

³Ecclesiasticus, Bk. II., 22.

of daily experience may be seen the "psychotherapy" of science and of religion.

Of late the question has been raised—and illustrated by several examples—whether it were well that some such service of healing should be recognized and undertaken as one of the organized ministrations of a Christian church.¹

The *reader* kept the church's books of Scripture, and read the lessons in congregational worship. And he was needed, whatever may have been true of the exorcist. Not, of course, that it was a new thing to have the Scriptures read to the people. That was a custom that dated from the days of the Apostles, and from far earlier days. It was a part of the order of instruction and worship in the Synagogue. "From generations of old, in every city," the Law was proclaimed, "being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."² Our Lord, on at least one Sabbath day, was reader: "He entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read."³ The Apostle Paul bids his young helper, Timothy, to attend to the "reading,"⁴ and directs that epistles of his own be read in the churches.⁵ Justin Martyr tells, in a classic passage, of such reading of the Gospels and the Prophets in his day.⁶ But it was not until perhaps a generation after Justin's time that the office of reader was created.⁷ Theretofore the reading was probably done by one of the existing office-bearers or by a layman, as might seem expedient. Now it was elevated into a separate and distinct office.

¹Fallows, "Health and Healing," *passim*.

²Acts xv. 21.

³Luke iv. 16.

⁴1 Tim. iv. 13.

⁵Col. iv. 16; 1 Thess. v. 27.

⁶"And on the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles [the Gospels] or the writings of the Prophets are read, as long as time permits. Then when the reader has ceased, the president orally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things." ("First Apology," 67.)

⁷It is first mentioned in patristic literature by Tertullian, incidentally: "And so it comes to pass [among heretics] that to-day one man is their bishop, to-morrow another; to-day he is a deacon who to-morrow is a reader." ("Against Heresies," 41.)

And there would seem to have been a call for such an office in the fact that the congregations were not receiving the evangelical instruction that was needful. For the voice of the prophet-preacher was coming to be heard less and less often. Besides, the bishop was in some instances an "unlearned man"—that is to say, unable to read.

So the reader was called forth, and not simply as a reader, but also as an expounder of the Scriptures, taking, in fact, the vacated place of the evangelist.¹ At his ordination it was hoped and prayed for that he might prove to be a prophetic teacher.² And so he did, let us believe, in some instances at least.

But ere long the Scripture-reading degenerated into the merest perfunctory performance; for in the devitalized atmosphere of an ever-increasing sacerdotalism the living voice of truth sickened and ceased.³

The *doorkeeper* had the keys of the church edifice formally put into his hands by the bishop, and did such duties as those of the usher and the sexton in modern churches.

These four offices were classed as Minor Orders. The offices of priest and deacon were the Higher, or "Holy," Orders. How about the office of sub-deacon? That seems to have been regarded as on the mystic border line between the other two, ranking with the Holy Orders in dignity and below them in power. But it was classed with them.

¹"For reader one should be appointed . . . of a plain utterance, and capable of clearly expounding, mindful that he rules in the place of an evangelist." (Harnack, "Sources of the Apostolic Canons," A. 3; pp. 15-17, E. T.)

²"Ordain a reader by laying thy hands upon him, and pray unto God and say: O Eternal God, . . . do thou also now look upon thy servant, who is to be intrusted to read the Holy Scriptures to thy people, and give thy Holy Spirit, the prophetic spirit." (Apost. Const., VIII., iii., 22.)

³In organizing the Church of Scotland, John Knox provided for the appointment of readers, whose duty it was to read the Scriptures and the congregational prayers, but not to preach or to administer sacraments. (Brown, "Life of Knox," Bk. II., p. 131.) Cf. the office of lay reader in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

V.

SERVICE: THE DEACONESS.

WE have seen reason to believe that the diaconate is the most characteristic and, in name at least, the most catholic of the three chief offices in the Christian Church. But we shall find that it may claim still another distinction. It is the only one of the three which (except in a few not significant instances) has opened its doors for the admission of women.

This of course is no matter of mere circumstance or accident. Is it not an official recognition of a certain immense amount of special fitness for Christian ministration that would otherwise fail to be utilized? Sympathetic personal service to the needy in body or mind—that was the primitive diaconal office. But the same is a distinctive gift and grace of womanhood. For this reason a church itself may be fittingly thought of as woman and mother—"the elect lady and her children."¹ One need not be surprised, therefore, if it should appear that the deaconess more nearly than the deacon represents, in the present day, the original idea of the Christian diaconate.²

I. RISE OF THE WOMAN'S DIACONATE.

The office of deaconess seems to have had its rise in the East. As to when and under what circumstances, however, it is impossible to tell. Prior to the fourth century there is no reference to it as an existing institution anywhere in Christian literature. Neither Ignatius, nor Tertullian, nor Origen—none of the fathers of the second or the third century—makes any men-

¹2 John 1.

²"It is no usurpation of office, but the redemption of office, for them [ministering women] to organize a corporate existence of their own which will require the normal authority of the Church to follow if it fail to lead. Already its male deaconship is comparatively idle, being superseded by the voluntarism of woman." (McGill, "Church Government," p. 393.)

tion of such an office.¹ The probability is that it attained no prominence, even if it had been instituted, before the fourth century.

True, a very early suggestion of some such office may be found in a letter from the pen of a pagan writer. This letter is one of the famous official communications of Pliny the Younger, pro-consul of Bithynia, about A.D. 112, to the emperor Trajan. The cultured Governor writing to his intimate friend, the wise and energetic Emperor, concerning the inquiries he has been making into the beliefs and practices of the Christians, tells of having put to the torture, in the course of his investigations, two maidservants "who were called deaconesses (*ministræ*)."² But whether the word *ministra* (the Latin equivalent of *διακόνισσα*, *woman servant*), as here used, implies membership in a sisterhood of deaconesses, in the present sense of the word, is very doubtful. It has been conjectured also that a certain Christian woman, Grapte, mentioned by Hermas in "The Pastor,"³ was an official deaconess—the merest guess.

Very different, however, is the evidence offered on this subject by the fourth and fifth centuries. Here we have not only the testimony of individual writers, such as Basil the Great, Chrysostom, and the historian Sozomen, to the existence of the order of deaconesses, but also the decrees of General Councils for its regulation.⁴

Here indeed, in the fourth century, we shall find what might be called the golden age of the woman's diaconate. Chrysostom (347-407), for example, had as many as forty deaconesses employed in his church in Constantinople, and six others in a

¹Passages in writers of this period that have sometimes been used to show the existence of the office of deaconess—for example, Ignatius to the Smyrneans, "Conclusion," and Tertullian, "On the Veiling of Virgins," c. ix.—are better understood as having no reference to this office.

²Ep. X. 96.

³"You will write, therefore, two books, and you will send one to Clemens and the other to Grapte, . . . and Grapte will admonish the widows and the orphans." (Hermas, Vis. ii. 4.)

⁴Council of Nice, Can. XIX.; Council of Chalcedon, Can. XV.

suburban church. His numerous letters, written in exile, to the leading spirit among them, a high-born and wealthy woman who devoted her whole fortune and all else, with extreme ascetic self-denial, to her chosen ministry, are all aglow with Christian admiration and eulogy. "My lady, the most reverend and religious deaconess Olympias," is the title by which he addresses her. Nor was the brave and peerless martyr-preacher the only great church leader of that age who highly approved the order.

Not, however, till the fifth century is there proof of its extension into the West. Not until the close of the eighth century does it appear in the city of Rome.¹ Never did it attain unto any considerable strength as a Western institution.

2. DEACONESS AND "WIDOW."

In tracing this history care must be taken not to confuse the deaconess and the Widow. Even in the apostolic churches, there was an order of Widows,² which reappears, perhaps in substantially the same form, in the second and some succeeding centuries. They were appointed to membership in the order—"enrolled as a widow"—though by what authority is unknown. And the apostolic requirement of not less than sixty years as the age of enrollment was more or less strictly observed.

It may be asked, Were these aged women to be cared for by the Church, or were they to care for others? Both. They were first of all to be cared for by the Church. They were its beneficiaries. Like the widows of a still earlier time in Jerusalem,³ being in need, they had a recognized share in the offerings of the congregations—till, indeed, under the Emperor Constantine, an allowance was made them by the State. But this was not all that their enrollment meant. At least in post-apostolic times they were also charged, certainly in some instances, with ministerial duties. These duties were either to give themselves to

¹Smith and Cheatham, "Dictionary of Biblical Antiquities," Art. Deaconess. Cecilia Robinson, "Ministry of Deaconesses," pp. 58, 89.

²1 Tim. v. 9-11.

³Acts vi. 1-6.

prayer and fasting in seclusion, especially as intercessors for their fellow-Christians, or to nurse the sick, counsel the young women, and lead heathen women to Christ.¹

But it is evident that the Widows were not the same as the deaconesses, though in some respects noticeably similar. Unlike the deaconess, the Widow was not introduced into her office by the imposition of hands (consecration), and did not serve as an assistant in baptism or as an usher in the congregation. Besides, it was distinctly required that the Widow should be subject to the deaconess together with the other office-bearers of the Church.²

But as to condition in life, deaconesses were usually, though not invariably, widows. Because in that day very few women remained unmarried till old enough to be eligible to the order of deaconess—that is to say, till forty years of age.

Probably for this reason, in addition to the fact of similarity in service, the distinction between the order of deaconess and that of Widow was lost sight of. In point of fact, however, it was not lost sight of in the East, where the order of deaconess was well known, but only in the West, where the order was never so prominent or prosperous. "The consecration of Widows whom they [probably the Eastern Churches] call deaconesses [which in fact they were, else they would not have been consecrated]," was the language of a Gallic Council in the sixth century.³ Naturally enough, the same confusing of two separate and distinct orders of women appears also in some of the

¹"Three widows shall be appointed: two to persevere in prayer for all those who are in temptation, and for the reception of revelations where such are necessary, but one to assist the women visited with sicknesses. She must be ready for service, discreet, communicating what is necessary to the presbyters, not avaricious, not given to much love of wine, so that she may be sober and capable of performing the night services, and other loving service if she will." ("Sources of the Apostolic Canons," A. 5 (Wheatley's Translation), pp. 19-21. Cf. Apost. Const., III. 5.)

²"Obedient to their bishops, and their presbyters, and their deacons, and besides these to the *deaconesses*." (Apost. Const., III. 7.)

³Council of Epaone (517), Can. XXI.

Western ecclesiastical writers of those days. And it may be met with in some modern writers and scholars.¹

3. THE PRIMITIVE DEACONESS.

What were the duties of a deaconess? In general it was her duty to minister to women in such relations as she could fulfill better than the deacon. For such ministrations there was then a special demand, because of certain ceremonies connected with the rite of baptism, and, as a more general reason, because of the prevalent customs as to the separation of the sexes.² The opportunities of a present-day woman missionary in the Orient, where manners and customs change so slowly from ancient to modern, may serve somewhat to illustrate these relations. The deaconess instructed female candidates for church membership, both before and after baptism, and assisted in the baptismal ceremony.³ She visited women in their homes—especially, it would seem, Christian women in pagan households—to tend them in sickness and to speak a word of instruction or comfort. In her sphere, like the deacon in his, she distributed money and provisions among the poor, and reported cases of sickness and destitution to the bishop.⁴ In time of worship she served as door-keeper or usher—"guardian of the holy gate"—to show any woman stranger to a seat among the women of the congregation.⁵ In fact, like the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, in our own time, which is "meant to do anything that the Church wishes it to do," the ancient deaconess was apparent-

¹For example, even in Bingham, "Antiquities," Bk. II., c. 22.

²Apost. Const., III. 15, 16.

³Apost. Const., III. 15.

"The most important of the functions of the Deaconess was that which related to the administration of baptism. The rites connected with this sacrament were elaborate. Immersion was preceded by the anointing of the whole body. Where the candidates were women this ceremony was performed by the Deaconess. She also received them as they came up out of the water, and to her was committed their further instruction in the faith." (Cecilia Robinson, "The Ministry of Deaconesses," p. 65.)

⁴Apost. Const., III. 19.

⁵Apost. Const., II. 57.

ly intended to make it her life work to serve the Church in any way appropriate to her position and possible to her powers. She was instructed, for example, to be zealous "in matters concerning bearing tidings, traveling, service, bondservice."¹

There were no deaconess homes or training schools, as in modern times. Nor have we the record of any requirement as to the taking of vows by the candidate for admission into the order. But she seems to have been expected to render a life-long service. Once a deaconess, always a deaconess, was the spirit if not the letter of the law.

The canonical age for ordination was at first sixty and afterwards forty years—"and that with careful testing."² An excessively high age limit, it may be said. But it was probably not too high for the circumstances of the time. Widows who had been twice married were ineligible; for the early Church looked with disfavor upon second marriages, and forbade them to its ministers.³ Virgins might be admitted into the order, and in certain cases married women. Though, as just said, the deaconess was usually a widow. Marriage after ordination was forbidden under severe penalties.⁴

In the earlier days of the order the deaconess was ordained by imposition of the hands of the bishop in the presence of the presbyters, deacons, and deaconesses, with a form of prayer.⁵ The prayer which seems to have been customarily used was so beautiful and appropriate that it has been adopted, almost without change, by churches of to-day. But the imposition of hands was regarded by a certain provincial council in Southern Gaul as too strongly suggestive of an approach to the priesthood; and by that council it was accordingly prohibited.⁶

¹Apost. Const., III. 19.

²Council of Chalcedon, Can. XV.

³Apost. Const., III. 2; VI. 17.

⁴"She shall be anathematized." (Council of Chalcedon, Can. XV.)

⁵Apost. Const., VIII. 19, 20.

⁶"Deaconesses shall no longer be ordained, and [in divine service] they shall receive the benediction only in common with the laity [not among those holding clerical offices]." (Synod of Orange (441), Can. XXVI. See Hefele, "History of the Councils, Vol. III., p. 163.)

Indeed, not only was the imposition of hands—a relatively unimportant matter—discontinued in one province; but the order itself soon began to show signs of decadence, even in the East, where it was once so flourishing.

The apparent causes of the decline of so high and fine a form of organized Christianity were such as the following: (1) The establishment of asylums decreased somewhat the demand for deaconesses as well as for deacons. (2) After baptism by pouring or sprinkling, and the baptism of infants, became the prevalent practice, the services of the deaconess were no longer needed in the administration of this sacrament. (3) Monasticism disparaged the office by contemning woman, and by substituting the nunnery for the field of active service—seclusion taking the place of ministration.¹ (4) Sacerdotalism offered scanty encouragement to any form of lay ministration; for its idea was that of a mediating priesthood, not that of a ministering church.

So fell the woman's diaconate into disuse. By the end of the sixth century in the West, and of the twelfth century in the East, it was rapidly ceasing to be. But it cannot be said to have been killed by decrees of councils. A Gallic council, as we have seen, did forbid it the rite of ordination—substituting for ordination, apparently, a simple diaconal benediction. And a hundred years afterwards another Gallic council abolished even this diaconal benediction, and thus left the order without any official recognition within the province represented.² But of course no mere provincial council could destroy the whole order of deaconesses, East and West. It died of a change of environment

¹"It is clear that the spirit of asceticism was growing rapidly, and overshadowing the practical life of service. We have here the first indication of one of the great causes which led to the decline of the primitive ideal of the Deaconess, and to her gradual absorption into the monastic orders by which she was presently surrounded." (Cecilia Robinson, "The Ministry of Deaconesses," p. 31.)

²"Moreover, we determine that to no woman shall the diaconal benediction be intrusted by reason of the frailty of the sex." (Council of Orleans (533), Can. XVIII.)

acting upon an inner life too feeble for self-renewal and readjustment.

4. REVIVAL OF THE IDEA IN THE SISTERS OF CHARITY.

Here, then, was a form of Christian service that was permitted to lapse, as the darkness of the early mediævalism gathered and the Church continued to gain the world and lose herself. Shall we briefly note its reappearance and the main lines of its development in the modern age?

In name the deaconess is not now to be found in either the Eastern or the Roman Church.¹ But the most essential features of her office have been reproduced in the Roman Catholic order of Sisters of Charity.

The founder of this order was Vincent de Paul. When in charge of a little parish at Chatillon, France, early in the seventeenth century, he was requested, on entering the pulpit one Sunday, to commend a poor family to the attention of the congregation. Complying with this request, he made so strong an appeal in their behalf that the family soon received baskets of provisions greatly in excess of their needs. Vincent had the instinct and idea of organization. He saw that in order to make the charity of the people effectual it must be systematized. Accordingly he called a meeting of the ladies of the congregation, laid the case before them, and organized a society, which he called "Ladies of Charity," for regulated ministry to the poor. They must dress in a simple style for their visits, must be very attentive and forbearing, and must minister to the soul as well as to the body.

The society increased in numbers, and ere long it might be found, here and there, throughout France. Its real success, however, did not keep pace with its numerical growth. For it was made up of married women with household cares of their own. Many of them also were debilitated by the enervating

¹The only exception to this assertion, I think, is the use of the name for certain officers in Greek convents.

atmosphere of the fashionable world. So they soon grew weary of personal visits to the sick and the poor, and sent their servants instead.

But there was one notable exception. Madame Louise le Gras (*née* de Merillac), a young widow of noble birth, became a member of the organization and devoted herself to its interests with untiring fidelity. In coöperation with this single-minded Christian woman, Vincent gathered together in the city of Paris a company of young women unencumbered with family duties and cares, who would be willing to become in a real sense caretakers of the poor. They were themselves, for the most part, country girls. In the month of November, 1633, a training school, with only three or four in attendance, was established for their benefit; and they began to live in community. In this same year they were raised by the Archbishop of Paris into a distinct order, which was afterwards officially recognized by Pope Clement IX.¹

At first they had no written rules and took no vows. After a few years, however, they were permitted to take vows that obligated them to service in the society for one year at a time. They were now called not "Ladies" but "*Sisters* of Charity;" and it is by this name that they are known throughout the civilized world.²

The order is under the government of a successor of Vincent—namely, the Superior General—and, next to him in authority, the Mother General, who is elected triennially. Each separate society, or "congregation," is governed by a Sister Superior, who is elected by its members, and is eligible to one reëlection, but no more.

The rules of the order, it seems, have remained almost entirely the same as when first given by the founder himself. The Sisters are not nuns. "The streets of the city or the houses of

¹Maloy, "Life of St. Vincent de Paul," chaps. iv., viii., x.

²This is the name by which they are commonly called. But their official title is even more beautiful—"Daughters of Christian Love."

the sick," said Vincent in his instructions to them, "shall be your cells, obedience your solitude, the fear of God your grating, a strict and holy modesty your only veil." Yet they are formed into communities, and are eligible for admission into the order only after a probation of five years. It is expected that on entering they shall become life members. But their vows—the fourfold vow of poverty, chastity, obedience, and service to the poor—are made for one year only, and the renewal of them is voluntary from year to year.

Their distinctive garb has been chosen in imitation of the costume of the peasant women in the neighborhood of Paris at the time of the founding of the order—just as the habit of the Franciscan friars is that of the Italian beggars of Francis' day. The headdress was originally a small linen cap; but ere long there was added to it the pure and white, though grotesque, *cornette*.

The rule of life is extremely rigid. The Sisters must rise at four o'clock in the morning, and then engage in a meditation and attend Mass. There is also to be a particular examination of conscience at noon and another in the evening. No prescribed devotional service, or office, is required of them. "Your office," said their founder, "is charity." They must be very abstemious in their diet; must cultivate no intimate friendships, either without or within the order; must not ask to choose their own field of labor, but receive their appointments from the Sister Superior to such work as she may deem most suitable; must not refuse to do any prescribed service, however loathsome or dangerous. The range of their ministrations includes the hospital, the orphan asylum, the elementary school, the homes of the sick and the poor—their wards alike the motherless child and the dying soldier.¹

It need hardly be added that the praise of these ministering "daughters of Christian love" is on the lips of many grateful or sympathetic witnesses in all lands. They have strongly com-

¹"The Catholic Encyclopedia," Vol. III., Art. "Sisters of Charity."

mended to the world not only the sadly mixed form of Christianity which they immediately represent, but also that truest source of their inspiration, the Christ who lived and died for "the healing of the nations."¹

But sisterhoods have not been confined to the Church of Rome, nor yet to the Church of the East where they have found a certain development.² Since the year 1845 they have been established under various forms of organization in the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church. Here they are pursuing, with more or less of Christian wisdom, their common objects of piety and beneficent ministration. In England they have multiplied considerably of late years, and in some instances have shown strong conventual tendencies.³

5. REVIVAL OF THE IDEA IN THE MODERN DEACONESS.

But the Sister is not a deaconess. The two are only similar, not the same. One difference is, that the sisterhood emphasizes the idea of seclusion from the world, inclining toward the monastic perversion of Christianity; while the woman's diaconate emphasizes the idea of active service. The Sister would live a life of prayer and intercession in her religious retreat, coming forth, however, with faithful regularity, to do a work of mercy in the busy and suffering world; the deaconess, like the Christian

¹"Besides this most prominent, and perhaps most worthy, sisterhood in the Church of Rome, there are others whose combined membership, it seems, about equals that of the Sisters of Charity; such, for example, as the Sisters of Mercy, who make irrevocable vows, take the white veil, and devote their lives to suffering and tempted women." (Bancroft [Mrs. J. B. Robinson], "Deaconesses in Europe," p. 248.)

²"Communities have been formed specially for the care of the poor and infirm, and Russia is proud of her Sisters of Charity. . . . The sisters are not generally regarded as nuns. They take no vows, they have no statutes or regulations specially sanctioned by the Church authorities." (Leroy-Beaulieu, "The Empire of the Tsars," p. 219 ff. See also Potter, "Sisterhoods and Deaconesses," p. 345 ff.)

³A small Anglican sisterhood at St. Katherine's, London, and another, the Sisters of the Atonement, in this country, have recently gone over to the Roman Catholic Church.

preacher or pastor, would live a life of constant ministration to the people, gathering strength for her labors in retirement and prayer.

The other chief difference is in the matter of organization. The sisterhood is only permitted by the Church, and it renders services at its own will; the woman's diaconate is, like the preaching of the gospel or the superintendency of a Sunday school, under the government and at the command of the Church—a part of its regular "machinery." As might be expected, therefore, the Sister must live in community, while the deaconess may or may not.¹

It is the office of the modern deaconess, which can be found nowhere save in the churches of Protestantism, that shall now engage our attention. It began in weakness, in a veritable day of small things. But on that account its history may be all the worthier of note.

A foretoken of the office appears even in the earlier years of the Reformation—namely, among the Mennonites² and the Puritans.³

Another trace of the office and work of the deaconess may be seen at the rise of Independency, or Congregationalism, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Robert Browne, its first organizer, included among the officers of a scripturally constituted church, not only deacons, "which are to gather and bestowe the church liberalitie," but also "Widowes, which are to pray for

¹"The Sisters of the Poor," a society of Christian nurses and evangelistic workers, organized by Hugh Price Hughes in connection with the Wesleyan Forward Movement, must not be taken as a representative sisterhood. It is in all but the name a society of deaconesses.

²McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia*, Art. "Deaconess;" Mrs. J. B. Robinson, "Deaconesses in Europe," p. 44.

³Toward the close of the sixteenth century an assembly of sixty Puritan ministers, in a declaration of rules and principles through which they hoped to reform the Church, gave directions concerning the choice of "deacons of both sorts—namely, men and women." (Neal, "History of Puritans," Vol. I., p. 140.)

the church, with attendance to the sicke and afflicted thereof."¹ The word Widow he uses undoubtedly as a New Testament name for deaconess.² There is also evidence that in some instances this woman's diaconate was actually instituted, and suitable persons elected to fill it, in the Independent congregations. But it did not become general, and was not perpetuated.

Of similar significance was the appointment of deaconesses by John Wesley when (in 1836-38) a missionary of the Church of England, in Savannah, Georgia. It was one of the instances in which this quick-sighted organizer showed so true a vocation to regain whatever was best in the lost institutions and spirit of primitive Christianity. But it was also one of the grounds on which his opponents charged him with Romanism.³

It was not, however, till the lapse of a century from this time that the modern deaconess movement made its real and effective beginning. For as the Sunday school, to cite a somewhat analogous instance, finds the work of Robert Raikes in 1781, notwithstanding the fact of similar schools before that time, the starting point of its subsequent organized and continuous development, so the institution of modern deaconesses finds its starting point in the work of Theodor Fliedner in 1836.

Fliedner was the Lutheran pastor of the village of Kaiserwerth-on-the-Rhine. Only a few months after his coming, in the year 1822, to this obscure village, his congregation of work-people, small at best, seemed well-nigh on the point of dispersion. For a silk manufactory, on which many of them were dependent for a living, had failed; and they must go where they could to get employment. Under the pressure of these conditions, Flied-

¹Robert Browne's Book, cited in Walker's "Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism," p. 22.

²Cf. the following declaration of Congregational principles:

"The Lord hath appointed ancient widows (1 Tim. v. 9, 10), where they may be had, to minister in the church, in giving attendance to the sick, and to give succor unto them, and others in the like necessities." (Cambridge Platform (1648), VII. 7.)

³Tyerman, "Life of Wesley," Vol. I., pp. 147, 148.

ner started on a nine months' tour, to raise money for the endowment of his church. And it was a journey more fruitful of good results than either he or any one else could have predicted. He found immense riches which he had not gone forth to seek.

In Holland and England especially the earnest and unpretending young pastor was deeply impressed with the benevolent institutions that came under his notice. "In both these Protestant countries," he says, "I became acquainted with a number of charitable institutions for the benefit of both body and soul. . . . At the same time I observed that it was a living faith in Christ which had called almost every one of these institutions and societies into life, and still preserved them in activity. This evidence of the practical power and fertility of such a principle had a most powerful influence in strengthening my own faith, as yet weak."¹

One form of benevolent service more particularly touched his heart. The prisons of both England and the Continent of that day were indescribably unwholesome, filthy, and immoral. Of ecclesiasticism there seems to have been an adequate amount everywhere; of enlightened practical pity for the criminal, almost none.

Elisabeth Fry, though only a Friend, was in the midst of her reformatory undertakings in the prisons. Fliedner met her in London and became intensely interested in the work she was doing. On his return to Kaiserwerth he succeeded in having a society formed in aid of prisoners in Germany. In 1832 he was sent by the government as a commissioner to inquire into the workings of charitable institutions in England. Here he again met with Elisabeth Fry; and on a visit to Scotland he made the acquaintance of Dr. Thomas Chalmers, who warmly sympathized with his ideals.

In September, 1833, a discharged woman convict, having heard of Fliedner's sympathy with her class, appeared at his door, after a six miles' walk, seeking help. A home was given her in his summer house. Afterwards a larger house was rented, and its doors opened as a home for discharged women con-

¹Mrs. J. B. Robinson, "Deaconesses in Europe," p. 54.

victs. But it soon became apparent that those who should have the care of such outcasts, as well as of the sick and helpless poor, who were all so much in need of Christian sympathy and service, must be properly trained for their work. Accordingly, in May of the year 1836, Fliedner, with some others, drew up a set of statutes for a society to be called "The Rhenish Westphalian Deaconess Society." In October of that year he opened a Christian hospital, and in the same building a training school for deaconesses. And thus arose the Mother House of all the mother houses and other Kaiserwerth institutions in Europe, Asia, and America.

The house was unpaid for. The outfit consisted of a very little furniture, most of it rickety, worm-eaten, or otherwise damaged. Fliedner's wife—his worthiest and most inspiring collaborer—was its first superintendent; a physician's daughter, Gertrude Reichard, its first deaconess; a servant girl, its first patient.

About this Mother House there grew up from time to time schools for teachers, an orphan asylum, a dispensary, an insane asylum, a manual labor school, a publishing house, a rest cottage in the neighboring hills, and the House of Evening Rest (*Feierabend Haus*) for deaconesses worn out in the service. All these in the lifetime of the founder.

Indeed, such had been the enlargement of the work that by the time of his death, in 1864, the number of mother houses was thirty, of places of work nearly four hundred, and of deaconesses fifteen hundred. Twenty-four years afterwards the mother houses numbered fifty-seven, the places of work over two thousand, and the deaconesses over seven thousand.¹

Nor is this the whole institutional outcome. For through Kaiserwerth's great example the founding of other deaconess institutions has been promoted in the Christian churches and even unto far-away lands. And the motto on the seal of the little

¹Mrs. J. B. Robinson, "Deaconesses in Europe," cited from the Kaiserwerth magazine, *Der Armen und Kranken Freund* (1888), pp. 86, 87.

church in Kaiserwerth finds an ever-enlarging fulfillment: "The mustard seed has become a tree."

The Kaiserwerth institution would seem, in fact, to be the model which the later deaconess institutions have more or less closely followed. It may be worth while, then, to ask, What are some of its constitutional regulations?

All the mother houses (whether in Europe or America, Berlin or Baltimore) are under the government of a triennial General Conference.

Each mother house is under the immediate control of two Directors. These are the Inspector (or Superintendent), who must be a minister of the gospel, and the Sister Superior, who is matron of the house. But the Directors are themselves responsible to a Board of Management.

For each deaconess there is a period of probation; a service of consecration to her office; a uniform dress; and maintenance, but nothing more, in sickness.

The probation having been passed satisfactorily, she must pledge herself to a five years' term of service. At the end of this time the pledge may be renewed.

If a deaconess decide to marry, or if her parents or guardians demand her withdrawal from the institution in order that she may care for them, she is entitled to an honorable dismissal.

Deaconesses are sent out from the mother house to their various places of work—"stations," as they are technically called—under the direction of the Sister Superior, and if possible never alone.

The mother houses interchange their annual reports, and hold prayer meetings, the "common" prayer meeting, all at the same time—namely, the first of each month of the year.¹

About two-thirds of the expenses of the Kaiserwerth institutions are met by payments for services rendered by the deaconesses; and the remainder by contributions of auxiliary societies, churches, and private individuals.

Among the pupils of Fliedner, in the year 1851, was a cultured young English woman. Already had she become interested, partly through the influence of Elisabeth Fry, in the instructed nursing of the sick. She would fain see an improvement in the ill-kept English hospitals of the day. It was this

¹Constitution of the Deaconess Mother Houses connected with the General Conference of Kaiserwerth (1901), given in Golder, "History of the Deaconess Movement," *Appendix*.

that awoke the desire to go, as a student of nursing, to Kaiserwerth. "Never have I seen a higher love," she wrote long afterwards, "a purer devotion, than there."

During the Crimean War the piteous cry of uncared-for sufferers drew this strong-hearted Christian woman, at the risk of her life and the loss of her health, to the military hospital at Scutari. She found it a house of neglect and misery indescribable; but under her organizing skill and tireless personal ministrations, as lady-in-chief of a force of eighty-eight woman nurses, it was transformed into a genuine home for sick and wounded soldiers. Two little books have come from her pen—one concerning Kaiserwerth, the other "Notes on Nursing." And in the whole sisterhood of ministering women of the hospital, no name would be sooner mentioned, as a synonym of enlightened and influential goodness, than that of the "angel of the Crimea," *Florence Nightingale*.

It is a single though eminent example of the wide-reaching usefulness of the House of Deaconesses at Kaiserwerth-on-the-Rhine.

6. IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES OF TO-DAY.

In nearly all the evangelical churches of to-day—in the Lutheran, the Moravian, the Reformed, the Anglican, the Scotch, the Methodist, the Congregationalist, and others—the woman's diaconate either has become or is becoming a well-established institution. Its form of organization, generally speaking, may be indicated as follows: Deaconesses for the most part must have a Home together;¹ unmarried women only are admitted to membership; they must pass through a preparatory course of training; no vow of perpetual service is required; a simple, distinctive costume is worn; affiliation with relatives and friends is not for-

¹"Each Deaconess not in a Home shall be under the direction of the Pastor of the church or officers of the society or institution in which she is at work; but those who are members of a Home shall be subordinate to and directed by the Superintendent in charge." ("Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church") (1904).

bidden; a suitable support is provided both for the time of active service and of disability; the service is that of caring for the poor and the sick, teaching and training the young, and reforming the immoral.

And now shall we judge this ministry of women, both as to rightness and expediency, from a few commanding points of view?

(1) *Its central idea.* Personal service, without publicity, not *for* but *to* the needy and the suffering, face to face—such is the formative principle of the deaconess' office. There are men and women who seek to rule. Some are Christian men and women. But great is the danger that these shall become deceivers of themselves and disturbers of the Church. There are men and women who seek to serve. Great is the promise that these shall become the true "apostles of the churches and the glory of Christ." Better than all romance or passion for poetic beauty is courageous love in homely and loathsome places. It calls hour by hour for that which is most heroic, even the giving of a self. It was the Highest and Mightiest who "went about doing good."

In the consecration service of the Kaiserwerth deaconesses is the charge: "You are servants in a threefold sense; servants of the Lord Jesus, servants of the needy for Jesus' sake, servants of one another."

(2) *Its scriptural precedents.* It has not been satisfactorily shown that the deaconess, like the deacon, was a recognized office-bearer in the apostolic churches. The passages supposed by some to prove it are unable to bear the strain of inference that has been put upon them.

Phœbe of Cenchreæ may well have been a "servant" (διάκονος) of the Church, in the non-official sense of that word—just as she was a "succourer" (προστάτις, protectress, patroness) of the apostle Paul and of many others.¹

The enrolled "widows" concerning whom directions were given to Timothy, as pastor of the church in Ephesus, were evi-

¹Rom. xvi. 1, 2.

dently aged and worthy beneficiaries rather than organized ministrants of the Church.¹

The name "women" (*γυναῖκες*, A. V. "wives") in 1 Timothy iii. 11, may be understood to mean either wives of deacons or official deaconesses. But if the former be taken as the meaning, the fact that no qualifications for the wives of bishops are given remains to be accounted for; and if the latter, the fact that simply the word "women" or "wives," with no indication of their occupying an official position, is left unexplained. So the case is doubtful.²

It is quite certain, however, that of unofficial deaconesses there were not a few in the days of Jesus and the Apostles. For Christ had put honor upon woman and had made possible to her a ministry of Christian love, such as had never before glorified her life.³ When, therefore, in the post-apostolic age, Christianity went on to develop and perfect its organization, and the conditions of the time created a special demand for such services as woman could offer, it is no surprising thing that her ministrations should have taken some organized, or regulated, form.

It was an institutional expression of the same spirit that prompted the women of Galilee to "minister of their substance" to the Master who had won their hearts' devotion,⁴ and Dorcas to make garments for the poor, and Lydia to constrain the messengers of the gospel to have their home in Philippi at her house,⁵ and Phœbe to be a resourceful helper of many, and Priscilla carefully to teach the "way of God,"⁶ and Mary of Rome⁷ to

¹1 Tim. v. 9, 10, 16.

²Dean Howson has said: "It appears to me that if we take our stand simply on the ground of the New Testament, the argument for the recognition of Deaconesses as a part of the Christian ministry is as strong as the argument for episcopacy." (Cecilia Robinson, "The Ministry of Deaconesses," p. 15.) It may be so; but neither the ministry of deaconesses nor that of bishops, as now existing, can find its form in the New Testament.

³John iv. 27; xvi. 17; Acts i. 14; ii. 17, 18.

⁴Luke viii. 3.

⁵Acts xvi. 14, 15, 40.

⁶Acts xviii. 26.

⁷Rom. xvi. 6.

bestow much labor there, and Tryphæna, Tryphosa, and "Persis the beloved," to "labor in the Lord,"¹ and the household of Stephanas to "set themselves to minister (*eis diakonían*) unto the saints."²

We may even go back to an older and less Christian time for an example of such a ministry. For the ideal home-maker of the Old Testament was a ministering woman:

She spreadeth out her hand to the poor;
Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. . . .
She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
And the law of kindness is on her tongue.³

(3) *Its economic aim.* "There is not in the world at this moment," says Hugh Price Hughes, "so costly and so utter a waste product as our average young lady—the daintiest bit of mechanism in the round world—cultured, dowered with love and enthusiasm and devotion, and courage too, yet mostly wasted, life mainly a thing of afternoon tea." Shall the "waste product" of this pungent criticism appear in the Church as well as in the family? Woman is not for dollhood. She is no more to be flattered into an idle passivity than to be degraded into a drudge. Let her distinctive powers be employed, in individual acts and habits indeed, but also through organization, for Christian service.

Organization in any social sphere is for the avoidance of waste and the increase of power. It is to interrelate unguided forces, so as to make regular and perpetual that which might

¹Rom. xvi. 12.

²1 Cor. xvi. 15.

"It was women such as Phœbe and Priscilla who created the idea of the female diaconate. Whether or no they received the name as an official title matters but little; they certainly 'executed the office' of a Deaconess, and bore splendid testimony to the value of a ministry of women. When the time for definite ecclesiastical organization came, the work of women had become a necessity to the Church, and they received at once [hardly at once] their place in her ordered ministry." (Cecilia Robinson, "Ministry of Deaconesses," p. 12.)

³Prov. xxxi. 20, 26.

otherwise prove to be spasmodic and transient. Is the principle familiar even to triteness? Equally so should be the fact of its complete application to woman's work in the Church of Christ.

Throughout the Church are women whose life is without the inner peace and outward efficiency which come through the acceptance of a recognized vocation. Yet many of them would find joy in a ministry to the poor, the untaught, the sorrowful. And the Church may open to them—as in the similar case of men who believe themselves called to the ministry of the gospel—the door of opportunity. It may offer them a home, food and raiment, companionship, direction, equipment, organization, the stimulus and support of a sisterhood of fellow-workers, with much trying self-denial in a noble and beautiful work. The Church would not hesitate to commission and trust them as missionaries abroad. It would send them there as teachers, nurses, physicians, Bible readers, organized woman workers in the gospel of Jesus. But to set them apart for similar work at home is equally an economy of both active and latent spiritual forces.

Among other indirect benefits, would it not help to make it known to all the people, in this age of social and industrial unrest, that the Church, like her Lord, is among them “as one that serveth?”

(4) *Its fruits.* The divine test, here as everywhere, must be applied. “And let her works praise her”—as undoubtedly they are doing—“in the gates.”

VI.

AUTHORITATIVE SUPERVISION: THE PRESBYTER —HIS EARLIER OFFICE.

THE fact that the end of office is service does not disparage official oversight and authority. For these are themselves means of service—often the most difficult and the most fruitful of all. Imagine them discontinued from henceforth! “Our *authority*,” says the chief pastor of the Corinthians, “which the Lord gave for *building you up* and not for casting you down.”¹ Could there be a truer service than edification?

I. NON-OFFICIAL OVERSIGHT MADE OFFICIAL.

There is, to begin with, a non-official oversight and a non-official authority. In the purely private and personal relations of life one person may not only exercise watch-care over another, but may sometimes speak with an authoritative voice. “Full of goodness, filled with all knowledge,” says the same chief pastor writing to the Romans, “able also to admonish *one another*;²” and in admonition there is a certain power of command, silent rather than expressed, that calls for obedience. “Ye younger,” says another Apostle, “be subject unto the elder.”³ Knowledge, wisdom, experience, character, age exert an authority, for the most part unconscions, over both belief and practice. “Be obedient,” says even the great officialist, Ignatius of Antioch, “to . . . one another.”⁴

But this diffused oversight and authority must be concentrated. The few must act for the many. It has to be made the special business of some to oversee and rule, according to recognized divine laws of social conduct—always, let it be remem-

¹2 Cor. x. 8.

²Rom. xv. 14.

³1 Pet. v. 5.

⁴“To Magnesians,” 13. So likewise “Clement to the Corinthians,” 38: “Let every one be subject to his neighbor, according to the gift bestowed upon him.”

bered, for the good of the ruled and not for the exaltation or aggrandizement of the rulers. Hence arises over all the inhabited earth governmental authority. The shipwrecked sailor on the sultriest island of the tropical seas or the farthest shore of the ice-bound North, will find it there. It is a differentiation of function quite necessary to the maintenance of human society. It is an ordinance of God. Anarchy's wild and wicked dream has no standing ground in reason or reality.

Nor can it be asserted that this order of society as higher and lower, ruling and ruled, is due to the imperfections of flesh and blood. Why should it not obtain in the most exalted spheres of being? For the eternal principle and source of government is in God himself. The Creator has supremacy over the created, from the lowliest to the loftiest. Who is lofty as compared with him? "Thy will be done, *as in heaven* so on earth." But it is God's good pleasure to enforce mediately as well as immediately the doing of his will. So his authority is, in various instances, put forth through personal representatives: "There is no power [*ἐξουσία*, authority] but of God. . . . He [the civil ruler] is the minister of God to thee for good.¹ May this, then, not be as on earth *so in heaven*? In fact, the Scripture representations of the heavenly life indicate that it is so. There are angels and archangels in the beatific world. There are thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities, powers, "invisible" as well as "visible."²

It is a beautiful story that is told by his biographer of the last hours of Richard Hooker. In reply to the inquiry of a confidential friend as to what had been the direction of his thoughts he said: "I have been meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed order and obedience, without which peace could not be in heaven; and oh, that it might be so on earth." Hooker was a lover of law. Most reverently did he seek it out and set it forth. True, he had not found in his laborious researches any fixed form of church government in the

¹Rom. xiii. 1, 4.

²Col. i. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 22.

New Testament; but there, as well as in the natural creation and in human history, he had found the immutable principles of government as a sublime expression of the Divine Nature itself. That had filled his imagination and satisfied his reason with an indescribable joy. His erudite argument kindled into a very song of the heart before the vision of the universal supremacy of Law: "All things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power." Fittingly, therefore, among the last thoughts of the great ecclesiologist, after a troubled life, were the order and obedience of those higher intelligences into whose company he humbly hoped to be received. "Order and obedience *without which peace could not be in heaven.*"

2. THE PRESBYTERATE AS AN EXTENSION OF PARENTHOOD.

The earthly type of the Divine government is the family. "I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family (*πατρία*, fatherhood) in heaven and on earth is named."¹ Here is no democracy or republicanism, but a natural monarchy. The conscious relation of the child to the father and mother is the best analogue we know of the relation of men, women, and children, one and all, to the Father in heaven.

Lo! Lord, I sit in thy wide space,
My child upon my knee;
She looketh up into my face,
And I look up to thee.

It is in the order of nature that the father and mother should occupy toward the child, irrespective of its own choice or action, a relation of authoritative supervision. Nor is this simply because the child's very life is from the parent. For if the parent should become manifestly incompetent, through imbecility or otherwise, to care for and govern the child, his authority ceases; and the State may rightly withdraw the child from his control. And on the other hand, an adopted child comes under the same

¹Eph. iii. 15.

parental supervision and control as if he had been born in the household. It is, then, not simply the actual parenthood, but in addition the resources of knowledge, wisdom, character, and wealth represented by superior age, that places the parent in his authoritative relation toward the child.

Thus we may see how naturally, through an extension of the parental idea, patriarchal government began. And at the same time a moment's reflection will show how unnatural it would be to push the parental idea beyond a certain narrow range of application. Forcibly to embody it in the government of a people, in Church or State, would be to imply that such a people were as dependent upon their paternal autocrat for the outward advantages and opportunities that go to make up their life as the child is dependent for these things upon his father and mother; that they are as inferior to him in intelligence, wisdom, and strength of character as the child is inferior to his father and mother; and that they are loved by him as the child is loved, with a personal, God-given parental affection, by the father and mother. It is the *fact* of government in human society that is divinely universal—not the *form*.

But family government could easily enlarge its sphere so as to become patriarchal—children's children and others being included. And it was by a somewhat similar development of the patriarchal idea that the first form of conciliar government arose. The two guiding principles were kinship and maturity of experience. That is to say, a number of families more or less akin passed under the government of a council of their seniors, or elders.

Now, these elders might be the rulers of an independent clan. Or, when monarchies were developed, and, increasing in power, embraced vast regions of country and various peoples within their dominions, the conciliar government by elders might still appear, in local communities, under the general government. And, as a matter of fact, it has thus appeared in sundry forms in all ages. We read of the elders of Pharaoh's house and of

the land of Egypt,¹ the elders of Moab, the elders of Midian.² A better defined example is found among the early Greeks, in the Spartan council of elders (*γερουσία*), whose members had to be at least sixty years of age; also among the early Romans, in their council of Old Men,³ or Senate (*senex, senatus*). Of the same general nature was the council of family elders that presided over the ancient Russian commune. And even in the present age a somewhat similar example appears in the Old Men of the aborigines' villages of our own continent.⁴ Let the older men serve as rulers: the capacity to do so confers the right and imposes the duty.⁵

Nevertheless gray hairs and wisdom are not synonymous terms. The poet may sing with truth of "years that bring the philosophic mind;" but it is equally true, as Photius the deacon said of Cyprian, that "greater progress is made by faith than by time," or, as "The Wisdom of Solomon" had taught long years before, that "understanding is gray hairs unto men, and an unspotted life is ripe old age." The younger may be both wiser

¹Gen. 1. 7.

²Num. xxii. 7.

³"Indeed, if this great trinity of excellences [counsel, wisdom, and influence] did not inhere in the old men, our ancestors would never have called their highest deliberative assembly 'the Senate.' Even among the Lacedæmonians those who exercise the fullest powers are called (as they really are) Old Men." (Cicero, *De Senectute*, c. 5.)

⁴"In all councils (as therein they are circumspect to do their actions by advice and counsel, and not rashly or inconsiderately) the younger men's opinions shall be heard, but the old men's opinion and counsel embraced and followed." (Morton, "Manners and Customs of the Indians" [Old South Leaflets], p. 4.)

⁵A provision for constituting a legislative body partly or wholly on the principle of seniority may be found in American Church History of the last century: "The General Conference [the one lawmaking body of the Church] shall be composed of one member for every five members of each Annual Conference, to be appointed either by seniority or choice, at the discretion of each Annual Conference." (An act of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1808.) The law thus enacted held its place in the Discipline of the Church for nearly a hundred years; though it would seem that no Annual Conference ever saw fit to appoint any of its delegates by the method of seniority.

and stronger—better “for counsel” as well as “for war.” Hence the universal tendency to lower the age limit, modifying the ancient order, so that the *senate* may come to be made up of the supposedly best men, whether older or younger.

In this same line of inquiry we find that what are familiarly known nowadays, through the Bible and the present economy of Christian churches, as presbyters, or elders, were originally—that is to say, in the earliest Old Testament times—in the literal sense, elderly men; but that in later times their name no longer implies an advanced age, though it does imply the maturity of mind and character of which old age is the natural sign.

Therefore it is most fitting that in the portraiture of the “bishop,” or presbyter, in 1 Timothy, a comparison should be made between the presbyterate in the Church and fatherhood in the home: the “bishop” must be “one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?).”¹ Nor shall we be surprised to learn that the presbyterate, through the ages of time and throughout the world, represents more generally than does any other office in the Church this fatherly care and authority. Preëminently it may be taken as standing for rule, discipline, order in the house of God. It was so in ancient Israel; it was so in the Israel of our Lord’s day; it was so in the first Christian churches; it is so to a considerable extent in the churches of to-day. Aptly does Richard Hooker speak of “presbyters, or fatherly guides.”

Even in the vision of the celestial kingdom given from the ascended Christ “unto his servant John” elders appear, four and twenty, clothed in white raiment, wearing crowns of gold on their heads, sitting on thrones round about the throne of the Eternal.²

Now, we may not be prepared, with some, to profess the faith that the Church is here represented “as continuing in heaven un-

¹1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.

²Rev. iv. 4.

der the same Presbyterian form of government which had characterized her whole history on earth,"¹ any more than we could believe, with Clement of Alexandria, that "the grades here in the Church of bishops, presbyters, and deacons are imitations of the angelic glory," or with Dionysius the Areopagite, that the mediæval hierarchy was divinely arranged to correspond, rank by rank, with the hierarchy of heaven. Yet it may certainly be said that the celestial elders (though their title is probably non-official, as in Hebrews xi. 2) are a chosen symbol of wisdom and order in the glorified Church.

3. IN ISRAEL.

At the very beginning of the Hebrew national history, the elders appear as a ruling class; for Moses is commanded to select Seventy of them as his assistants in the administration of government.² In the time of the Judges they are said to have gathered together and come to Samuel to ask for the appointment of a king. Nor should we fail to notice that they came not for themselves but as representatives of the people: "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the *people*."³ Under the reign of Josiah they are summoned by the king to coöperate with him, apparently, in destroying the prevalent idolatry and bringing the nation to make a covenant with Jehovah.⁴

Especially to be noted are the elders of the cities; for it was in the municipal government that these officers appeared most prominent and authoritative.⁵

The elders' office was both administrative and judicial. They were not, however, the only judges.⁶ In fact, it is vain to seek direct and full information as to their functions, which, there

¹W. B. Arrowood, "Sermon on Polity of Presbyterian Church," p. 21.

²Num. xi. 16, 17.

³1 Sam. viii. 4-7.

⁴2 Kings xxiii.

⁵Deut. xix. 12; Josh. xx. 4; Judges viii. 14, 16; Ruth iv. 2; 1 Sam. xi. 3; xvi. 4; 1 Kings xxi. 8-11; Ezra x. 14. See Schürer, "Jewish People in Time of Jesus Christ." (Div. II., Vol. I., p. 150.)

⁶Ezra x. 14.

is reason to believe, were not strictly defined in that primitive age. Neither have we any account of the method by which they were chosen to office. Probably the choice was more passive than active—by common consent without a formal election. Showing themselves competent to give counsel and to govern, they gave counsel and governed—and were obeyed.

During the inter-biblical period, the presbyterate still holds its place as a feature of the internal government of the Jewish people,¹ and not as a fossilized or decadent institution. On the contrary, it shows a vigorous and increasing vitality.²

Passing on to New Testament times, we shall meet with the elder as a still more familiar figure in Israel. For meantime the Great Sanhedrin, let it be remembered, has been organized in Jerusalem, and also the local councils, or small sanhedrins, throughout the land. What was now the presbyteral office? Essentially the same, so far as can be ascertained, that it had been from the beginning. For not only did the elders occupy seats in the Great Sanhedrin, but in those towns whose population was almost wholly Jewish they themselves were the governing body. As such they composed the small, or local, sanhedrin—in the New Testament called, like the Great Sanhedrin, a “council”³—whose functions, corresponding to those of the ancient presbyterate, were both administrative and judicial.

¹“And they called together all the elders [τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους] of the city.” (Judith vi. 16.)

“And Jonathan returned [from one of his victories], and when he had called the elders [τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους] of the people together, he consulted with them,” etc. (1 Maccabees xii. 35.)

“Since the Jews, . . . when we came to the city [Jerusalem] received us in a splendid manner, and came to meet us with the senate,” etc. (Letter of Antiochus the Great to Ptolemy, in Josephus, Ant. Bk. XII., ch. iii. 3.)

²“Undoubtedly heretofore each high priest had consulted the heads of families and prominent men of the community before taking important action, but henceforth [from the time of Antiochus the Great] they constitute an organized and recognized body, the legislative and executive powers of which were constantly increased.” (Kent, “History of the Jewish People,” pp. 305, 306.)

³Matt. x. 17.

The office of elder must not be confounded with that of the "ruler of the synagogue" (*ἀρχισυνάγωγος*)—or "rulers," for it seems that in some cases there was but one, and in others more.¹ This was an office to which was assigned the special oversight of the synagogue worship, and of the building in which the services were held. It might be, and as a rule it probably was, filled by an elder; but not necessarily so. It was a different office. But the two were in accord and coöperation with each other for the general well-being of the community.² The regular meeting place of the council of elders was the synagogue; and on the Sabbath they were honored with seats on the platform in time of worship. The ruler of the synagogue presided, and the elders made a semicircle about him. Theirs were the "chief seats."³

Not only among the Jews of the Holy Land, but also in the communities of the Dispersion, the prevailing form of government seems to have been presbyteral.⁴

The elders of this time were elected by the people.⁵ Their authority was firmly established and of wide range. Acting as a court, they could pronounce upon an offender a sentence either of excommunication or of corporal punishment; and in case of the latter the "attendant" of the synagogue⁶ had to inflict the penalty. Jesus forewarned his disciples: "They will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you."⁷

Here, then, to borrow the language of civics, was a strong

¹Luke xiii. 14; Mark v. 22.

²Schürer, "Jewish People in Time of Jesus Christ," Div. II., Vol. II., pp. 62-65. Hort, "The Christian Ecclesia," pp. 65, 66.

³Matt. xxiii. 6.

⁴In the Dispersion there was a body of non-official "elders" called the *γερονσία*; its chief was called the *γερονσιάρχης*; and its committee of management, the *ἀρχοντες*. See Schürer, "The Jewish People in the Time of Christ," Div. II., Vol. II., pp. 247-252.

⁵"And absence of pride, as also gentleness and humility, are mentioned as special qualifications." (Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Vol. I., p. 438.) Edersheim, unlike Schürer, identifies the elders with the rulers of the synagogue.

⁶Luke iv. 20.

⁷Matt. x. 17.

conciliar, or republican, form of government. Not a pure democracy, not an aristocracy or a monarchy; but an ecclesiastic republicanism. Such was the Jewish presbyterate.

4. IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Now, it might have reasonably been expected that, in the absence of any word of the Lord to the contrary, a similar form of government would be adopted by the first Christian congregations. For these congregations were composed, either wholly or mainly, of Jews, and withal were not separatists or schismatics. Even the sects of Pharisees and Sadducees were not schismatics; much less the so-called sect of Nazarenes. These claimed to be, what in fact they were, the orthodox members of the Church of their fathers. They were the new and true Israel. They called their congregations either synagogues or churches—though far preferably, it seems, the latter.¹ A Christian synagogue, indeed, might be one of the old-time synagogues converted as a body to the faith of Jesus.

It were well that the Church should think gratefully of that preparer of the way of the Lord, both in "his own" land and among the nations—the Jewish synagogue. It had pulpit without altar, preacher without priest, worship without sacrifice or incense, a congregational type of religion. And the same were features of the early Christian congregations.

But what calls more immediately for remark is, that just as the simple forms of worship in the synagogue appeared, the same yet not the same, in the Christian congregation, so might it have seemed likely that the simple and effective forms of presbyteral government in the Jewish community which gathered

¹Schürer, *op. cit.*; "The Idea of the Church," Part I., ch. ii.

The word "synagogue" is used for the Christian "congregation" in *Hermas*, "The Pastor," *Commandments*, 11: "When, therefore, a man having the Divine Spirit comes into an assembly (*εἰς συναγωγὴν*) of righteous men who have faith in the Divine Spirit, and there is offered prayer to God by this assembly (*τῆς συναγωγῆς*) of the righteous men, . . . the man, being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks to the multitude as the Lord wishes." And so in two other passages of the chapter.

about the synagogue would appear, the same yet not the same, among the Christians also. And so they did.

Accordingly the presbyterate is mentioned in the Acts and the Epistles rather as a matter of course than as if it were a new institution. We have no such account of its origin, for example, as is given of the appointment of the Seven.¹ We simply read that the Christians of Antioch, providing relief for the needy Christians in Jerusalem, "sent it to the *elders* by the hands of Barnabas and Saul;"² that these same two apostles appointed *elders* in every church which they had gathered in Asia Minor,³ that Paul "sent to Ephesus, and called to him the *elders* of the Church;"⁴ and so on. The presbyterate of the Jewish-Christian congregations, then, was not an actually new institution.

And now another step. As Gentiles were won to Christian discipleship, from time to time, and brought together in churches of their own race, wholly or predominantly, they would not unnaturally follow the example of church order set forth by their Jewish brethren. But, in addition to this, they were accustomed to government by elders in their own communities. For the government of the Græco-Roman cities, as well as that of the numerous political and religious societies in these cities, was of this character.⁵ Thus two classes of examples, Jewish and Græco-Roman, were exerting their influence in the same direction upon the organization of the Gentile churches. And it was a natural consequence that they too should become presbyteral societies.

One is not to assume, however, that this form of government was everywhere prevalent from the first. For example, nothing is said in the New Testament about elders in the church at Antioch, though the "disciples," "the church," and "the brethren" are spoken of more than once. And the same is true of the church at Corinth and at Rome.

¹Acts vi. 1-6.

²Acts xi. 30.

³Acts xiv. 23.

⁴Acts xx. 17.

⁵Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," pp. 62, 63; Lindsay, "The Church and the Ministry," p. 154.

VII.

THE PRESBYTER: HIS LATER AND PRESENT OFFICE.

IF what we have thus far learned is trustworthy, we are not to conceive of the presbyterate any more than of the diaconate or of any other office as instituted by some apostolic mandate. It came from within, not from without. It was provided, as the need made itself felt, which in some circumstances would be sooner than in others.

Everywhere, in fact, there may be seen a close affinity between social need and office—an affinity which is suggested by the use of the same Greek word (*χρεία*) for both ideas, the need and the office to which it gives rise.¹

What was the number of presbyters in each Christian congregation, or whether there was any required or customary number, we do not know. In the local sanhedrin the number varied within certain limits—probably from seven to twenty-three²—according to the size of the congregation; and it may be that a similar rule obtained in the churches.

As to the official duties of the presbyter (or bishop), the New Testament answer may be given in few words: First, as stated in general, to oversee and take care of the congregation,³ to teach, if he could;⁴ to help the weak; to rule⁵—not to overrule, but to be himself what he required others to become;⁶ to exhort and to convince gainsayers;⁷ to minister to the sick;⁸ secondly, as illustrated in particular instances, to take charge of money contributed for the relief of the poor;⁹ conjointly with the Apostles to decide urgent disciplinary questions;¹⁰ together with an

¹Acts iv. 35; vi. 3.

²Schürer, "History of Jewish People," Div. II., Vol. I., pp. 151-154.

³Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 5.

⁴Titus i. 9.

⁵1 Tim. iii. 2; v. 17.

⁶James v. 14.

⁷Acts xx. 35.

⁸Acts xi. 29, 30.

⁹1 Pet. v. 2, 3.

¹⁰Acts xv. 23-29.

Apostle, to set persons apart with laying on of hands for some Christian ministry.¹

But observe, there was not one of these functions but might be performed by some other minister of the Church—Apostle, teacher, deacon—or by Christian people generally.

The presbyters, then, were the chief local officers in a Christian society, as in the contemporary Jewish communities, of the apostolic period. Whatever was meant by ecclesiastical order, or, more specifically, whatever was meant by representative supervision and authority over a church, that is what they stood for. Over *a* church, let it be noted; not over *the* Church, or over a number of churches. For there is no satisfactory evidence that the Christian elders' jurisdiction extended, any more than did that of the elders of the local Jewish councils, beyond the single congregation which they were appointed to serve.

But we must now pass from the congregations of the New Testament period to their successors, and on to the present day.

I. PRESBYTERS AS JUDGES AND ADMINISTRATORS.

In the sub-apostolic age (say, 100-150) a very conspicuous function of the presbyters was that of judges and administrators of the law. They had, indeed, various administrative duties: the oversight of congregational worship, the direction of finances, the care of the sick and the poor,² the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper. And in some instances, perhaps generally, they were teachers or preachers.

But most prominent were their judicial and disciplinary functions. The Church was the Christians' tribunal: their causes

¹1 Tim. iv. 14.

²For this ministration was not wholly turned over to the deacon—even as it is not by the elder of a Presbyterian or a Baptist church of to-day: "And let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor." (Polycarp, "To the Philippians," 6.)

must not be litigated in heathen courts.¹ But especially must strict discipline be maintained. The Bride of Christ is to keep herself unspotted from the world. Christian morality is to be emphasized even more than definite theological knowledge and belief. Hence the presbyter was very prominently a judge and administrator of the law.

Our familiar idea of the care of a church is that of a pastor preaching and teaching Sunday after Sunday, making pastoral visitations, and administering discipline—the last being the least. But it would be quite amiss to date this twentieth century picture in the sub-apostolic age. True, all the features of it may be found there; but with the proportions markedly different. The presbyter-pastors—note the plural number—of a church in those early days were, first of all, literally *rectors*.

And we shall find the same thing to be more distinctly true of the single-presbyter, or single-bishop, pastor, when he appears. There is evidence of this, for example, in what may be called the first book on pastoral theology ever written—in the “Pastoral Rule” (*Regula Pastoralis*) of Gregory the Great (d. 604). Gregory, it is true, compares the pastor to a physician, and has much to say of him as a teacher; but the idea of rulership in connection with his office—as expressed in such words as “ruler,” “supreme rule,” “weight of government,” “care of government,” “dominion,” “pastoral authority,” “place of rule,” “eminent dominion”—is ever present with a prominence and persistence quite unknown to the pastoral theology with which we in our day are familiar.

But here let us be careful to take note of an important distinction. The Christian eldership was not wholly the same as the Jewish eldership. It was not even nearly the same. For example, the Jewish council of elders had control of municipal

¹1 Cor. vi. 1.

“Let not those who have disputes go to law before the civil powers, but let them by all means be reconciled by the elders of the Church, and let them readily yield to their decision.” (“The Clementines,” *Clement to James*, 10.)

as well as of ecclesiastical affairs; the Christian elders, of ecclesiastical affairs only. Again, the Jewish council of elders sat as a complete and independent court, deciding cases of discipline, condemning the guilty, and administering suitable punishment, with no coöperation on the part of the people. And the same is true of the session of elders in Presbyterian churches of the present day. But it is not certain that the early Christian elders were clothed with such exclusive prerogatives. In some of their meetings, at least, whether for discipline or for other purposes, the people seem to have consulted and voted with them.¹ It may well be, indeed, that in many cases the congregation would leave these matters to the elders' decision—not caring to share their responsibility, though perhaps present at the meeting.² But there is evidence of the recognized right of the congregation to take part in the consideration and decision of disciplinary cases. Even as late as the close of the second century Tertullian writes: "It is a very grave forestalling of the judgment to come, if any have so offended as to be put out of the communion of prayer, of the solemn assembly, and of all holy fellowship. The most approved elders *preside*."³

For the Christian presbyterate, like the other Christian institutions, had an innate formative idea. It was no mere copyist. It filled with its own life, and thus molded for its own purpose, whatever it may have taken from an existing office. Thus, then, it showed itself, especially in the first and purer period of church history, to be more democratic than the Jewish presbyterate. It would admit the people to a larger share in government.

And not only so; it was also much more pastoral in its spirit and work—teaching, exhorting, ministering to the sick, helping the poor, shepherding the flock of Christ. Hardly could a Jewish council have made a like-minded response to such an appeal as that of the great Apostle to the elders of the church in Ephesus: "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of

¹Acts xv. 4, 6, 12, 22.

²Acts xxi. 17, 18.

³Apology, 39.

God, which he purchased with his own blood. . . . Wherefore, watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. . . . In all things I gave you an example, how that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."¹ An elder of the Jews, a Christian pastor—the two were far from being identical.

A side light falls upon this point from the forms of worship in the synagogue and in the Church. We have already seen that these forms were the same, yet not the same. In fact, they were inwardly very different, and hence more or less different outwardly. Compare the Scripture-reading, the exposition, the formal prayers, the chanting by the precentor of one of the few prescribed Psalms with the congregational response of "Halleluiah" or "Amen and Amen,"² of the ancient Jewish assembly, with the reading of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the letters of Apostles, the prophetic speech and interpretation, the spontaneous outbursts of fervent prayer, the joyousness, the singing one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, of the primitive Christian congregation. It was the difference between the Oriental lamp and the electric bulb, between the vocabulary of prose and of poetry, between routine and inspiration. And similar was the difference between presbyteral oversight in a Jewish community and in a Christian church.

But so far as the concurrence or coöperation of the people with the presbyters of the Church was concerned, this came to be regarded as of less and less value, through the encroachment of hierarchic ideas, till it was no longer sought or even permitted.

2. THE PRESIDING PRESBYTER, OR BISHOP.

We shall have to remark, further, that just as the presbyter-pastors tended to release themselves from the coöperation of the

¹Acts xx. 28-35.

²"The Jewish Encyclopedia," Articles on *Synagogue* and *Psalms*.

congregation and act independently, so the presiding presbyter-pastor, who came to be known by the exclusive title of bishop, tended to rise above his fellow-presbyters and concentrate in his own person the functions which he and they had formerly exercised in common. Thus the bishop was not only made the supreme ruler of the congregation, but he also began to be looked upon as the most proper person to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper and to preach. Others must not, except in his absence and with his permission, perform these functions. Also, while the presbytery were still his council, he did not hesitate to act at times in his own name.¹

We are not to suppose, however, that this concentration in the presiding presbyter, or bishop, of the functions formerly exercised equally by all presbyters implied any inherent difference between the two officers. It was not a law laid down by Christ or his Apostles, but purely a matter of order and expediency. It was in virtue of his pastorship of the congregation that others within his jurisdiction must be restrained from the performance of official ministerial acts without his permission. The regulation was not essentially different from what may be seen in certain Christian pastorates of the present day.²

¹For a fuller view of this transition see pp. 232 ff.

²"It was not fit or just that any one should preach or govern in a parish without the permission of the bishop, or pastor, thereof; . . . for though a presbyter by his ordination had as ample an inherent right to discharge all clerical offices as any bishop in the world had, yet peace, unity, and order obliged him not to invade that part of God's Church which was committed to another man's care, without that man's approbation and consent." (Lord King, "Inquiry into the Primitive Church" (1841), p. 64.)

Cf. the regulations on this subject in some present-day churches: "Any traveling or local preacher or layman who shall hold public religious services within the bounds of any mission, circuit, or station, when requested by the preacher in charge not to do so, shall be deemed guilty of imprudent conduct, and shall be dealt with as the law provides in such cases." ("Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South" (1906), Par. 306.)

For the first few years of its history the Methodist Episcopal Church gave its preachers in charge sole authority to expel unruly or immoral members of the Church.

On the other hand, the rise of diocesan episcopacy, about the beginning of the third century, strengthened the presbyterate. For, as new congregations were formed round the mother church, and presbyters were appointed as their pastors, these presbyters in charge occupied very nearly the same position in their respective charges as the congregational bishop had occupied in his. They could baptize; they could celebrate the Lord's Supper; and preaching came to be recognized, at least in the West, as a function of the presbyters as well as of the bishop. In a word, the simple presbyter now became the sole immediate pastor of a congregation—a position which he had never before occupied.

Here for a few moments it may be worth while to pause and note more particularly the significance of one of these functions. Regularly, in his own congregation, without any special permission of the bishop, the presbyter could now *administer the Lord's Supper*. A simple minor matter, was it? On the contrary, it was a change in ecclesiastical order that has been described as a "revolution—if anything in the gradual development of church organization may be called revolutionary."¹ As will be seen in the next chapter, the presidency of the Lord's Supper had helped greatly to fix the status of the bishop; it now helps in like manner to fix the status of the presbyter. To preside at the table of the Lord—that of itself was sufficient to impart a distinct worth and dignity to the presbyter's office. And it is a function that he has retained ever since.

For a time the presbyters in charge were held as members of the bishop's council, to aid in governing his group of churches—namely, the congregation of which he was still the immediate pastor, and their congregations, of which he was now the general superintendent. But in point of fact they probably did much less service than heretofore as councilors; and in course of time their place came to be filled by a body of presbyters and deacons known as canons. Thus the presbyters in charge were still fur-

¹Lowrie, "The Church and Its Organizations," p. 297.

ther detached from the bishop and strengthened in their independent position.

3. PRESBYTER PERVERTED INTO PRIEST.

But above all did the sacerdotal idea, which had become strongly influential by the middle of the third century, increase the power of the presbyter. For it clothed him as such with the prerogative of official mediation between God and man. Henceforth he stood at an altar and professed to offer up the body and blood of Christ for the sins of the world. This was now the presbyter's profession of authority and power;¹ and as time went on, it increased unto still greater hierarchic perversion of his office and ministry. To him as confessor must the penitent come to be released from his sins. Eternal life and death, in any individual case, depended upon words which he claimed, in his capacity of priest, to be empowered to speak. It was hardly possible that the difference of order between layman and presbyter should ever be wider than it had now become.²

Accordingly the Roman Church has never declared that there is any higher Holy Order than the priesthood. The bishop and even the pope claim to be higher in order of dignity and power of office only.³ The priesthood is one, because there can be

¹Note the incommensurable power of presbyter and of deacon in *Jerome*: "I am told that some one has been mad enough to put deacons before presbyters—that is, before bishops. For while the apostle clearly enough teaches that presbyters are the same as bishops, must not a mere server of tables and of widows be insane to set himself up arrogantly over men through whose prayers the body and blood of Christ are produced?" ("To Evangelus," I.)

²"The power of consecrating and offering the body and blood of our Lord and of remitting sin is such as cannot be comprehended by the human mind, still less is it equaled by, or assimilated to, anything on earth. . . .

"The power with which the Christian priesthood is clothed is a heavenly power, raised above that of angels." (Donovan, "Catechism of the Council of Trent," *On the Sacrament of Orders*, pp. 212, 215.)

³It must be admitted, however, that the motive has not always seemed to be doctrinal or historic conviction. In the great determinative case, at least, it seemed to have been papal policy. That is to say, it was through this influence that the Council of Trent refused to "declare, pronounce, and define" that

nothing essentially greater—the priest at the altar being a daily miracle-worker, the most stupendous that ever trod the earth.¹

Henceforth, then, through the Middle Ages and in the Eastern and Roman Churches of the modern age, we are to think of the presbyter as claiming priesthood and appearing always in that character. With entire appropriateness the New Testament title of *presbyter* has been pushed aside, because it no longer suggests, much less contains, the essential feature of the office. A new office, come from without, has taken the place of the old. A new officer has arisen. *Priest, offerer of sacrifice*—that is the word which overshadows the significance of all other appellations by which he may be known.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARCH-PRESBYTERATE.

A presbyteral development that cannot be condemned as a perversion was the arch-presbyterate. This office appears in two different forms, whose origins are separated by a distance of four centuries. First, it was an office for the city. Here the arch-presbyter, who was usually, though not necessarily, the senior member of his presbytery, exercised a certain authority delegated to him by the bishop, over his fellow-presbyters of

bishops held their office *jure divino*. It was urged by many bishops to do so. But the pope through his legate persistently and most skillfully opposed such action. He was afraid of the bishops. Had they not in the Council of Constance declared that the pope himself was subject to the General Council? Were they not now in very many instances—the Spanish bishops, *e. g.*, as a body—restless under their oath of allegiance to him, claiming that they held their office immediately under Christ (*jure divino*), and not immediately under the pope (*lege ecclesiastica*). This would never do. Already the bishops were dangerous to the pope's supremacy; and if the Council should make their office *jure divino*, their power to resist papal authority would be greatly increased. So, apparently with this motive, it was not done.

¹“The turning of the host into God was so great an action that they [the schoolmen] reckoned there could be no office higher than that which qualified a man to so mighty a performance; . . . so they raised their order or office so high as to make it equal with the order of bishop.” (Burnet, “History of the Reformation of the Church of England,” Vol. I., Addenda, ad. pag. 400.)

the bishop's council. His main function, however, seems to have been to take charge of congregational worship, and to administer baptism, on occasion of the bishop's absence. Also, in case of a vacancy in the episcopal see, the arch-presbyter was entitled to perform the functions of a bishop—with the very probable exception of ordination. His position foreshadowed that of the dean of a mediæval and a modern cathedral.

But there also arose a rural arch-presbyter. This development did not occur till the eighth and ninth centuries, and was confined to Western Europe. It was occasioned by circumstances peculiar to that region. In certain pretty wide districts there would be but one church in which the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper might be administered. But in addition to this principal church, here and there were chapels, or oratories, in which only a service of prayer was conducted. Each of these chapels was presided over by a presbyter, or perhaps by a deacon, or perhaps even by a member of some minor order of the clergy. Now the presbyter-pastor of the principal, or baptismal, church had a certain oversight of the chapels, or non-baptismal churches, and accordingly received the title of arch-presbyter. And even when after a time these chapels became baptismal churches, in which the sacraments might be administered, the jurisdiction of the arch-presbyter over them was kept up. Thus originated the rural arch-presbyterate.

The office was similar to that of the rural dean in the Church of England—an officer who represents the bishop in executing official writs and in taking oversight of morals and manners in the district assigned him.

Another, and in our country much more familiar type, of the arch-presbyterate is the presiding eldership—or “district superintendency”—of the Methodist Episcopal Churches. Here is an office of presbyteral supervision that began with the organization of Methodism as a church in America. An elder is appointed to preside over his fellow-elders and other preachers within a certain prescribed district—in most instances chiefly or wholly in the country. To hold quarterly conferences in the various

pastoral charges, to supply churches with pastors, to direct candidates for the ministry to their studies, to see that discipline is enforced, to "preach, and to oversee the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Church"—such are the chief functions of this arch-presbyter in American Christianity.

5. THE SCRIPTURAL PRESBYTERATE OF TO-DAY.

At the present time the scriptural form of the presbyterate is best represented, as might be imagined, by the Christian communions of the Presbyterian order—such as the Church of Scotland, the Reformed Churches of the Continent and of America, and the Presbyterian Churches of Great Britain and America. These churches have divided the presbyterate into two offices—namely, that of both teaching and ruling and that of ruling only. The former may be classed as a clerical and the latter as a lay office. So there are ministers, or "teaching elders," and lay rulers, or "ruling elders." And the government of the Church rests wholly in the hands of these two classes of presbyters.

This system dates from the time of the Reformation, and bears the stamp of that prince of system-builders, John Calvin. For Calvin's genius was notably the genius of order. Was he needed by his age? could it be said to him, as Ignatius wrote to Polycarp, "The times call for thee as do pilots for the winds?" Most unhappy have been the effects of that compact system of doctrine in which he gave logical form to his conception of theism and the evangelic faith. For "the mistakes of the great are calamities." But in the one respect with which we are concerned in the present study, Calvin was both greatly needed and greatly successful. He actualized the best thought of his age and of subsequent generations, as an organizer, no less truly than did Martin Luther as a witness for religious thinking, experience, and freedom.

For the Reformation was not a wild rebellion. Had it been such, it would soon have broken itself to pieces and been swept away. There was no lawless element in it. "Under law to Christ" was its principle of procedure. The Reformers would

do nothing against the truth of authority but everything for that truth. They realized that to cast off the yoke of Rome, intolerable as that yoke had been, was a perilous undertaking. For might it not make an opportunity for license, born of self-will, to simulate liberty, the child of law?

It actually did make such an opportunity. Through its abuse a way was opened for the wildest vagaries of the mind as well as the sanest convictions and the deepest intuitions, for the baser as well as the nobler passions. The new liberty was made an "occasion to the flesh" as well as an open door to service in love. There were outbreaks of both social and religious fanaticism, agitators who were agitators only, "Zwickau prophets," the War of the Nobles, the War of the Peasants, a throwing off of the restraints of law both human and divine. What wonder if it should awaken doubt and fear in the order-loving heart? "The aspect of Germany," said Luther, "has never been more pitiful than it is now."

But the point to be accentuated is that this violation of law and order was no proper part of the reformatory movement. It went dead against the will and teaching of the great Protestant leaders. It was such a turbulence as may be expected to attend for a time the breaking up of an old order and the attempt to introduce and maintain a new. Let England in the reign of Edward VI. and America after the War of the Revolution bear witness. There will be temporary evil when one's house is torn down before the constructive work can be done upon the house that is to take its place. As promptly as possible, therefore, the Reformation must indeed re-form the Church, the house of religion. It must give it, among other things, a symmetrical, strong, and rightly constituted government. And this the presbyteral system promised.

Calvin could bear no haziness in his thinking—as unlike as possible the group of theologians described by Milton, who reasoned and argued on foreknowledge, fate, and the like high themes,

And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

Calvin, even as a young and immature theologian, "found an end." He mapped out the whole course of his thought. Hence we do not find him indulging in mere verbalisms, nor making an idol of phrases, nor satisfying himself with throwing out vague and symbolic words at his objects of research. All must be exact, well adjusted, unified—every nebula resolved into its constituent stars or else disregarded. Thus the Visible Catholic Church became to Calvin a clearly defined conception, and he would have it organized after a clearly defined pattern. He made much of church membership and discipline. Outside the Church there was no salvation;¹ inside there must be systematic supervision and enforced authority. The true Church might be known by its scriptural "notes," and though here and there "enveloped in some cloud of ignorance," and liable to err on non-essential points, was infallible "in things essential to salvation."² When it spoke there was nothing left for its member but to obey. As to the weight of emphasis upon this obedience, there is scarcely an appreciable difference between Calvin and Rome. A very narrow margin, it must be admitted, was left for "the freedom of the Christian man."

The model for his system of government, considered simply as an authoritative presbyteral supervision, Calvin found in the Scriptures. The additions thereto, with the animating "aristocratic" or legal spirit, were his own. Though Calvin would have added nothing except under what he fully believed to be due warrant of the Old or the New Testament. He would have died first.

Thus, through Calvin and his followers, there has been restored to the Church a ruling presbyterate, which, tenacious of its fundamental principles yet free to modify its forms, has witnessed well through generations and centuries for righteousness, order, and good government.

Presbytery is reverent, loyal, self-possessed. It would bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ, the one King in Zion, whose

¹Institutes, IV., i. 4.

²Institutes, IV., viii. 13.

unshared dominion endures forever. It would oppose the least encroachment of sacerdotal delusion and tyranny—though not successful at all times in keeping itself clear of tyrannical exactions. Through its representative courts it would guard the rights of the people, while at the same time avoiding the uncertainties of a pure democracy.

It has sometimes made alliance with the State—as, for instance, in Switzerland and Scotland—which can be but poorly reconciled with its continual confession of Christ's sole headship of the Church; but the direction of its influence upon civil government, on both sides of the Atlantic, has been uniformity toward authority without tyranny and liberty without license. The roll of its witnesses for religious freedom is long and brilliant.

In almost all the other Protestant Christian communions, the presbyterate is a purely clerical office. The lay element in the Church's government is introduced in other forms than that of the "ruling elder." There is only the "teaching elder," who, however, as in Presbyterianism, is also a ruler—the fully authorized preacher in the pulpit, administrator of the sacraments, pastor of the people, presiding officer of the church.

VIII.

UNITY: THE BISHOP—EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF HIS OFFICE.

IN the presbyter we have met with the universal representative of church order. We are now to study one of the implications of this order—namely, unity, as exemplified in the office which most perfectly sets it forth.

In fact, order of all kinds implies unity, and is in its ultimate idea personal. Things that are arranged—be they bricks in a wall, dishes on a dinner table, or words in a sentence—are arranged according to some principle and by some person. They must take their places under this unitary control, else there will be confusion and conflict.

The striving of all philosophic minds is toward the One. All the way along, from the dawn of speculative inquiry to the present time, this has been the line of interpretative thought concerning the universe. Its outcome is theistic. Only in the Eternal Reason can the restless human reason find rest.

If, then, God is one and has made all things to have oneness in himself, it is not difficult to understand why man, in his multifarious doings, should, consciously or unconsciously, be guided by a similar principle of unity. For is he not made in God's image, and intended to do the works of his Father? It was the perfect Son, in whom the Father was well pleased, who said: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing, . . . for the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth."¹ But something of what he himself doeth the heavenly Father shows to every man. "Be ye imitators of God as beloved children." To do this voluntarily and in the highest things is human perfection; for it is to "walk in love, even as Christ also loved."² To do it uncon-

¹John v. 19, 20.

²Eph. v. 1, 2.

sciously and in the lower spheres of action is a human necessity.

Accordingly we find men, taught of God, following after unity in all their undertakings, practical, artistic, intellectual. To build a dwelling house is to gather all its diverse materials and component parts about the one commanding idea of occupancy by a family. To paint a picture is to subject all the forms and colors that are put upon the canvass to the one ruling conception, whatever it may be, in the artist's mind. Similarly in any work of utility, of art, or of thought, the mind, while pleased indeed at variety, is offended at disorder. Instinctively it feels after the unifying idea.

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY IN SOCIETIES—IN THE CHURCH.

It is thoroughly rational, therefore, that in those greatest and most powerful of human creations, the various societies that men form among themselves, some principle of unity should be followed. It is followed, as a matter of fact, in every instance—from that of the feeblest sorority to that of the mightiest world power. And it will take form most probably in a single personal representative. When we speak of a nation as the "body politic," it is a very significant term that is used. In an animal body the members are very far from being all on the same level of authority and power; the arm, for instance, controls the fingers and can put them where it will. But the head, which is the seat of the brain, which is the throne of the soul, controls all: in the head the whole body is unified. And in like manner a nation, whatever its forms of legislation or administration, finds its external, representative unity in its one supreme ruler. Hence the tremendous power which it often permits, or even requires, him to wield. What is the President of the United States? Probably neither a soldier nor a sailor. Yet in time of war he is made commander in chief of both army and navy. One is better than many—a single headship is what the nation calls for.

It is so, too, with similar bodies of men, such as municipal or industrial or social organizations. It is so in a school—one principal; and in a Sunday school—one superintendent. It was so in the Græco-Roman cities, when the first Christian congregations were gathered there.¹ It is so even in such organizations as are formed for a temporary purpose or a single occasion. Any public meeting called for the transaction of important business will begin by the election of a chairman. A committee will do the same. A jury of twelve freemen and peers will choose a foreman.

Now the application of this principle to the subject in hand is quite obvious. Unquestionably organized Christianity will ever find its unifying truth in the one Lord Jesus Christ. That of which we have now to take note is of infinitely smaller import, and yet not lacking in interest. It is the minor and visible unity of a single Christian congregation.

Any organized local church will call for a presiding officer. No prophetic insight would be necessary to predict this result. Whether more than one church, whether all churches the world over, shall be united under a single officer, or under a general government in any form, is a similar question, but not the same. It is analogous to the question as to how many nations, or how many industrial, or educational, or literary societies, shall be thus united. It may come up for some consideration later. What we have now to think of is the local congregation.

But let us not expect to see this principle illustrated to any notable extent in the New Testament churches, because their organic development as yet was incomplete. So, for the most

¹"Whether we look at the municipal councils, at the private associations, religious and secular, with which the East was honeycombed, at the provincial assemblies, at the boards of magistrates, at the administrative councils of the Jews both in Palestine and in the countries of the Dispersion, or at the committees of the municipal councils whose members sometimes bore, in common with the Christian and the Jewish councils, the name of elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*), we find in every case evidence of a presiding officer." (Hatch, "Organization of the Early Christian Churches," p. 85.)

part, they do not seem to have attained unto a single personal headship, but were supervised by a council of coequal presbyters. In Jerusalem, indeed, it was not altogether so; for James, the brother of our Lord, was recognized there as standing in some relation of headship to the church.¹ In certain other cases, it may be, the need of a president would be supplied by the oversight of an Apostle, or of an apostolic delegate.² The Corinthians, for example, would have no occasion to choose another chief pastor during the year and a half that Paul, their apostolic founder, spent among them. Even in time of absence he could be "present" with them still by letters and messages, and "in spirit."³ But there can be no doubt that, generally speaking, the highest officers in the churches of the first two generations of Christians were a number of coördinate presbyters.

Passing now into the sub-apostolic age, we find the same thing to be true. Not the slightest hint is given, either by Clement of Rome or by the Didache or by the "Pastor" of Hermas or by Polycarp, of a single episcopate, or pastorate. "The Apostles," says Clement, "appointed the first fruits of their labors to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe;" and the presbyters in the church at Corinth he classes with these "bishops."⁴ "Appoint for yourselves," says the Didache, "bishops and deacons."⁵ "The old woman [the Church] came and asked me," says Hermas, "if I had given the book to the presbyters, . . . and then she said, . . . But you will read the words in this city, along with the *presbyters who preside over*

¹Acts xxi. 18; Gal. ii. 9, 12.

There is no reason to believe that James exercised any prelatic powers. The evidence shows him to have been a presiding officer, but nothing more. When the Antiochians had made up their contribution to the church in Jerusalem, they sent it by the hand of Barnabas and Saul not to James but "to the *elders*." (Acts xi. 30.) And when they were in doubt as to the conditions on which to receive Gentile converts into the Church, they sent their deputation "to Jerusalem, unto the *Apostles and elders* about this question"—James being a member of the council. (Acts xv. 2.)

²1 Tim. i. 3; Titus i. 5.

³"To Corinthians," 42, 44.

⁴1 Cor. v.

⁵Didache, 15.

the Church."¹ "Wherefore," says Polycarp to the church at Philippi, "it is needful to abstain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and deacons"²—the same two classes of officers addressed by the Apostle, about forty years before, in his letter to this same Philippian church.³ Certainly with respect to the churches represented by these several writings the proof of a plural overseership is as clear and concurrent as could be asked for any such historic fact.

2. BEGINNINGS OF THE SINGLE CONGREGATIONAL EPISCOPATE.

But before the close of this period (say, 150 A.D.) there is a new development to be noted. Indications and evidences of a single congregational bishop appear. Justin Martyr (d. *ca.* 165), describing the observance of the Lord's Supper, says: "The *president* in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, . . . and what is collected is deposited with the *president*."⁴ This president of the meeting was perhaps in a larger sense president of the congregation.

And in the recently published "Sources of the Apostolic Canons"—supposed to represent certain localities toward the close of the second century—we come upon direct evidence of the same office. The qualifications of the bishop are described. Even a very small congregation is to have its bishop (pastor)—as in our own day. He is to be chosen by the "competent" voters of the congregation; and if there be not as many as twelve such voters, the neighboring churches are to be written to and asked to send three selected men to assist in the examination of the brother proposed for the episcopal, or pastoral, office.⁵ What now are the bishop's functions? His place is at the altar, as leader of the congregational worship; and the offerings of the

¹Vis. II. 4.

²"To Philippians," 5.

³"The blessed and glorified Paul, . . . when absent from you, he wrote you a letter." ("To Philippians," 3.)

⁴First Apol., 67.

⁵"Sources of Apostolic Canons," A. 1. (Edited by Harnack, E. T., pp. 7-10.)

people are placed in his hands for distribution.¹ And it would seem that he is to be the chief representative of the church to outsiders—at any rate, one of his required qualifications is that he shall have “a good report among the heathen.”² But the real rulers of the congregation are the presbyters. They are to see that order is observed in the meeting,³ to them the widows are to report,⁴ and they even exercise a supervision over the bishop’s action in the distribution of the offerings.⁵

Here, then, is an interesting and valuable bit of information. A single bishop presiding in the congregation, distributing the gifts, representing the church to the outside world; yet with the whole congregation, himself included, under the supervision of the presbyters. It is a transitional step toward the monarchical, or independent, congregational episcopate—as advocated by Ignatius of Antioch.

3. COMPLETER DEVELOPMENT OF THIS EPISCOPATE.

Let us then open the Epistles of Ignatius. At once a very different picture from any we have yet seen is put upon the canvass. Three separate and distinct orders, or offices, are recognized in the ministry of all the churches, with one exception (significantly, the Church of Rome), to which these letters are sent—namely, that of deacons, of presbyters, of *bishop*. All these are to be honored as institutions of God; and the predominant divine idea for which the bishop stands is that of unity.

¹“Sources of Apostolic Canons,” A. 2.

²*Ibid.*, A. 1.

³*Ibid.*, A. 2.

⁴*Ibid.*, A. 2.

⁵*Ibid.*, A. 5.

“Thus may it be paraphrased: ‘The presbyters are to provide for the bishop at the table of gifts, in order that they may distribute the gifts (to the various persons needing them and entitled to them), and themselves receive the necessary contributions (that is, as far as it is necessary).’ It is consequently a question of a kind of control by the presbyters over the management of the gifts by the bishop, in order that everything may be done orderly.” (*Ibid.*, p. 13, n.)

Ignatius himself was bishop—the *one* bishop—of Antioch in Syria. Condemned in that city to be thrown to the lions of the Roman amphitheater, he embraces the opportunity to write letters to various churches on his triumphal march (as it was, in his estimation) to the imperial city. We know nothing with certainty of Ignatius' life and character except what is shown in these epistles. But in them he is recognizable as a noble and striking personality—not well equipoised perhaps, an extremist, but humble, bold, enthusiastic, of a spiritual mind, absolutely loyal to his Lord. He writes with a pen of fire. Having been adjudged to death for Christ's sake, he is eager for the stroke to fall. His bonds are "spiritual jewels," because they promise contact with beasts at Rome, through which bloody gate he shall pass to wear the martyr's crown.

Nor did Ignatius regard his own death only as imminent, but also the end of the world¹—an idea that seems to have prevailed almost universally in the Ante-Nicene age. The earth was nearing its death-throes. Christ would soon come in glory to overthrow the wicked and set up his universal kingdom. "The last times," Ignatius says, "are upon us;" "Weigh carefully the times, look for Him who is above all time, eternal and invisible, yet who became visible for our sakes."² And what was the result of Ignatius' own weighing of the times? An overpowering conviction of the need of ecclesiastical unity. The churches were not united as they ought to have been. False teaching—Judaizing, Doketism—faction, schism, evil tempers were arising to threaten their integrity. So the demand for unity was imperative, and the visible center and representative of that unity was the bishop. Hence entire and unquestioning obedience to the bishop must be insisted on; and it is insisted on, chapter after chapter, in epistle after epistle. Indeed, this claim of subjection to episcopal, or pastoral, authority passes all reasonable bounds, and becomes preposterous, if not profane. "He who *does any-*

¹To the Ephesians, 11.

²To Polycarp, 3.

thing without the knowledge of his bishop," writes the rapt and impetuous pen, "does serve the devil."¹

Not the most devoted Episcopalian of an evangelical church in the present day could for a moment acknowledge the authority of such a lord of the congregation as the Ignatian bishop. Imagine the type to have become universal—every Christian congregation in the world ruled by a pastor who was under no ecclesiastical authority whatever and who was himself absolutely autocratic. Is there anywhere on earth to-day an Ignatian in belief?

It must not be inferred, however, that Ignatius looked upon the bishop as alone to be revered and obeyed. For he repeatedly joins the presbyters with him as officers to whom also the submission of the Christian community is due.

It was the *power of government* for which Ignatius stood. That was the idea that possessed him. When he refers to the heavenly things, for example, it is not to streets of gold and fountains of living water, but to "the places of the angels, and their gathering under their respective princes." So in a Christian congregation, which should be a miniature heaven of order, peace, and obedience, he would have official authority to be strong, unimpeachable, absolute. This he thoroughly believed necessary to the preservation of the Church in those perilous times, or, for that matter, perhaps in any time—if other times were to be. "See that ye obey the bishop," he said, "*and the presbytery* with an undivided heart."² But the bishop impersonated this power of government in the congregation as did

¹To the Smyrnæans, 9.

"Subject to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbyters as to the law of Jesus Christ." (To the Magnesians, 2.) "It is manifest, therefore, that we should look upon the bishop even as we would look upon the Lord himself." (To the Ephesians, 6.)

So a marriage contracted without "the approval of the bishop" was held by Ignatius to be not "according to God." (Ep. to Polycarp, 5.)

²To the Ephesians, 20; To the Trallians, 3, 7.

"For Ignatius the authority of the bishop, of the presbyters, and of the deacons, forms in some sort an inseparable whole, a harmony of spiritual forces, a pattern of the unity which ought to reign among the faithful. He

no mere presbyter or board of presbyters—as did no other living man. Therefore, without hesitation or complaint, all should submit themselves to him.

Now these singularly overwrought views of pastoral power were not uncongenial to the sacerdotalism that later gained complete ascendancy in the Church. In scriptural forms of Christianity, however, they could not hope to maintain themselves. So far from securing unity, they would disturb and divide. But the single episcopate itself, which Ignatius is the first writer in the whole body of Christian literature to set forth, became universal and has been perpetuated. All churches have it. Indeed, was not such a result inevitable? For this episcopate is simply the office of pastor, preacher in charge, rector of the local congregation.

Let us be careful, also, in passing from the letters of Ignatius, not ourselves to exaggerate the significance of his exaggerated view of congregational obedience to the pastor. Three things may here be noted in connection with this Ignatian episcopal idea: (1) His dream of the mystic personality of the bishop, with its over-emphasis of pastoral authority, was his own, reasonably explicable on the ground of personal temperament and circumstances; and hence it should not be taken as expressing the general view and practice of the churches;¹ (2) he was not

does not imagine that discord can enter in among them: they are for him *the government*, Authority with a capital A. . . . The demands of Ignatius in favor of episcopal authority are still more demands in favor of ecclesiastical authority and of authority in itself than in favor of the bishop properly speaking to the detriment of the other officers of the Christian societies." (Réville, "Les Origines de L'Épiscopat," pp. 495, 497.)

¹"The same exclusive passion which he brought to the love of suffering and the seeking for martyrdom he brought also to the extolling of that which seemed to him to be the panacea for all the ills of the churches—submission to the episcopacy. But a calm analysis of even his own testimony proves that the reality was very far from corresponding to his dream, and that if he is compelled to insist with so much energy upon obedience to ecclesiastical government, it is because the churches themselves which he addresses are still very far from putting it into practice." (Réville, "Les Origines de L'Épiscopat," p. 481.)

Cf. Ramsay, "Church in Roman Empire." pp. 370, 371.

so much the champion of the single as opposed to the plural pastorate of a church as of the fact rather than the form of absolute official authority; (3) as a matter of fact, the single pastorate was not universal at this time, but confined apparently to the churches of Asia.

At the beginning a democratic congregational government with a board of presbyters as overseers (bishops); then a board of presbyters as rulers, with a bishop as president of the congregation; and then the single bishop as ruler—such is the evolution of the episcopate in the local congregation.

Let it be borne in mind, however, that it is not certain that all the churches passed through all three of these stages of development. And even if they did, it is quite certain that they did not pass through them contemporaneously. In some cases the process was much more rapid than in others. Especially should it be noticed that while in the churches of Asia, as represented by the Ignatian epistles, the rule of the single bishop was at least in course of establishment in the first quarter of the second century, it was not yet established in the churches represented by the "Sources of the Apostolic Canons" even as late as about fifty years thereafter.

4. THE IRENÆAN CONCEPTION OF THE BISHOP'S OFFICE.

Toward the close of the second century a different conception of the episcopal office was taught by Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons. We shall be prepared for an appreciation of it, if we remember that meantime heretical teachings had increased and multiplied. They had "come in like locusts to devour the harvests of the gospel." Perhaps the most irrational, and certainly the most powerful, of the heretics were the Gnostics, in confutation of whom Irenæus wrote his great book "Against the Heresies."

Let it also be remembered that as yet there was no formally recognized canon of the New Testament Scriptures. And, moreover, the Gnostics were claiming to have in their own possession

apostolic writings¹ and also traditions, "secret teachings," which set forth the true faith of the gospel. How, then, were the Christian people to be effectually safeguarded against false teaching? It was no alarmist's cry. There was a very real danger—greater than in the time of Ignatius. In fact, there was more than any mere danger, however great; for the work of disintegration had actually begun in Christian communities. The subtle forces of error were already making encroachment and conquest. There seemed no hope of successfully resisting them except with a firm and united front. There must be unity of belief and of action. Let the lines be drawn and the Catholic Church distinctly made known as opposed to heretics and schismatics.

But here arose a vital question. There could be no doctrinal unity without some standard of orthodoxy. What, then, was this standard, and how might it be recognized and maintained?

Irenæus' answer to such questions was that the true doctrine might be found in the churches that had existed in various countries from the days of the Apostles. It had been committed to them by the Apostles themselves, especially to the presbyters, or bishops²—he seems to use the two terms interchangeably, or at least to call the bishops *presbyters*³—and transmitted by them to the generations following.

Now the presbyters of these successive generations were chief-

¹Such, e. g., were "The Gospel of the Truth," in the possession of the Valentinian sect, and Marcion's Gospel, which was a mutilated copy of the genuine "Gospel According to Luke"—the parts which Marcion regarded as Judaic rather than Pauline being omitted.

²"The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.)

³"The tradition which is of the Apostles, which is guarded by the succession of the *presbyters*." ("Against Heresies," III. 2, 2.) "We are able to recount those whom the Apostles appointed to be *bishops* in the churches, and their successors." (*Ibid.*, III. 3. 1.) "And her [the Roman Church's] faith proclaimed unto men by the succession of *bishops*." (*Ibid.*, III. 3. 2.) "Cleave to those who both guard, as we said before, the doctrine of the Apostles, and with their order as *presbyters* exhibit such speech," etc. (*Ibid.*, IV. 26. 4.)

ly old men, "elders" in the literal sense of the word; for it was the mature or elderly men that would naturally be chosen, and the office was for life. So the aged presbyter might be pictured as handing on, before he should "go hence and be no more," the tradition of apostolic teaching, which he himself had learned in youth from some aged predecessor.

Irenæus himself was such an "elder." In his early days in Asia he had even known men who had known Apostles; he had been a friend and pupil of Polycarp, who had been a friend and pupil of the Apostle John.¹ So it was a chain of but three links—the Apostle John, the martyr Polycarp, the bishop Irenæus: only a single intermediate link between Irenæus and the disciple that leaned upon Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. Or, to mark the successive dates, we may think of our Lord as speaking his last words to the disciples, and sending them out into all the world as his witnesses, about the year 30 of our era; of the disciple John in Ephesus at the close of his life, about the year 100; of Polycarp in Smyrna, about the year 155; of Irenæus in Lyons, about the year 202. Here, distinctly traceable, was a succession of evangelic witnesses from the very days of Jesus, sending down the word of oral testimony through five generations of Christian believers.

But it could not always continue so. As the oncoming years kept pushing the apostolic age farther and farther back into the shadow-land of antiquity, this line of testimony would be seriously weakened. What should take its place? The answer of our age would be: Scholarship—not tradition, but the original documents, the apostolic writings, are the rule of faith; and these must be vouched for by New Testament scholars. The answer of that age, however, as uttered by Irenæus, was one

¹"For when I was a boy I saw thee [Florinus, a presbyter of the church at Rome] in lower Asia with Polycarp, moving in splendor in the royal court. . . . I am able to describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed, . . . and the accounts which he gave of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord." (Irenæus, quoted in Eusebius, *H. E.*, v. 20.)

that could be much more easily grasped and utilized: The bishops, he said, are the official conservators of both the apostolic writings and traditions. They were able to vouch for the true apostolic doctrine, delivered to them through the presbyteral succession, to be delivered by them in turn to those who should succeed to their places, and so on through the generations of time.

Here, then, were the official custodians and interpreters of apostolic teaching. But what if they should make mistakes concerning it? This was a difficulty with which Irenæus did not directly deal. But he did suggest that the bishops were supernaturally illumined, so that it was not to be supposed that they would make mistakes. In virtue of their office they received from the Holy Spirit a gift of insight—a “sure gift of the truth”—through which they would be able to recognize a genuine apostolic writing or tradition. He speaks but vaguely and uncertainly, it is true, about this episcopal gift—as well he might.¹ But at any rate the bishops are to be acknowledged and trusted as the bond of orthodoxy, the guarantors of the faith, the duly qualified teachers of the Church.²

¹The passages (the only two, so far as I know) in which this special power of discerning the truth seems to be claimed for the chief officers of the churches are the following: “Wherefore we should hearken to the presbyters who are in the Church; those who have their succession from the Apostles, as we have pointed out; who with their succession in the episcopate received a sure gift of the truth (*certum charisma veritatis*), at the good pleasure of the Father.” (“Against Heresies,” IV. 26, 2.) “Now where one may find such [good presbyters] Paul teaches, saying, ‘God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, then prophets, thirdly teachers.’ Then where the Lord’s free gifts are set, there we must learn the truth.” (*Ibid.*, IV. 26, 5.) In this latter passage Irenæus apparently has in mind the *charismata* of the apostolic age, and supposes the *charisma veritatis* to be one of them, and to be possessed by the presbyters (and here he probably means specifically the bishops) of his own day.

²Of course I am here quoting, not indorsing, Irenæus’ views. The fact of a church’s having apostolic founders and being presided over either by presbyters or by a single bishop did not guarantee the purity of its teaching. Neither the general congregation nor the office of supervision was such a doctrinal wheat field that the enemy could not enter it to sow tares. On the contrary, from the first “when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.”

Observe, the idea of the episcopate for which the devout and impassioned Ignatius pleads is that of the individual bishop, presiding over his congregation with absolute authority, and standing toward it in the place of God himself. No predecessor, no preceding ordination, no intermediary of any kind is taken account of. Immediately from God is this pastoral office with its unimpeachable authority over each separate little Christian community. But the idea which the more thoughtful and large-minded Irenæus, two generations later, would make good, is that of the bishops as the chief officers of successive apostolic churches, fulfilling the function of depositaries of the faith once delivered to the saints, and standing in the place of the Apostles. In Irenæus, then, appears (and for the first time in Christian literature) the idea of an apostolic succession—though not of such a succession as is now ordinarily known by that name.

IX.

THE BISHOP: LATER DEVELOPMENT OF HIS OFFICE.

A HALF century later we reach the age of "the Ignatius of the West," Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (d. 258). The name of this able and zealous administrator is perhaps the most significant in the whole history of the episcopate.

I. PECULIARITIES OF THE CYPRIANIC EPISCOPATE.

Cyprian strenuously emphasized the authority of the individual bishop. Like his prototype, Ignatius, he regarded this authority as monarchical. Though elected to his office by the bishops of the province, with the consent and coöperation of the people,¹ the bishop, when once elected, becomes not the people's representative, but their lord. The presbyters, to be sure, are his councilors, and he ought to consult them, as also the people (Cyprian did so). But like the early Roman king in relation to his senate, or the modern Methodist Episcopal bishop in relation to his "cabinet" of presiding elders, he may at his option either accept or reject their counsel. Under a sense of responsibility to God alone, it is his own will, not that of presbyter or people, that he executes.²

Nor might any bishop exercise the least authority over any other. There could be no lower and higher: the episcopal pastor

¹"Which very thing, too, we observe to come from divine authority, that the priest [*bishop*, here as uniformly in Cyprian] should be chosen in the presence of the people, under the eyes of all, and should be approved worthy and suitable by public judgment and testimony." (Cyprian, Ep. LXVII. (LXVII.), 4.)

²"Though the presbyters may still have retained the shadow of a controlling power over the acts of the bishop, though the courtesy of language by which they were recognized as fellow-presbyters was not laid aside, yet for all practical ends the independency of the episcopate was completely established by the principles and the measures of Cyprian." (Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry" (Whittaker), p. 108.)

of a church in the obscurest village in Christendom stood on precisely the same legal level with the pastor of the church in the city of Carthage or Alexandria or Rome. Though all the bishops in the world except one should unite to command or to judge that one, he would rest under no obligation to submit. Each was a monarch; and no monarch, however small his dominion, may acknowledge the control of any other, nor of all others combined. "For no one of us," said Cyprian, presiding at a Council of Carthage, "sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, or by tyrannical terror forces his colleagues to obeying, inasmuch as every bishop, in the free use of his liberty and power, has the right of forming his own judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he can himself judge another."¹ The president's language surely does not lack strength or explicitness.

But more distinctively the name of Cyprian stands for the recognition of the collective bishops as constituting the universal Church. "The Church is in the bishop:" that was his word, and it had reference not only to the local congregation, but to all Christian congregations as a whole. For he goes on to say: "While the Church, which is catholic and true, is not cut nor divided, but is indeed connected and bound together by the cement of priests [bishops] who cohere one with another."²

It is true, a germ of this doctrine might be discovered in the teaching of Ignatius and of Irenæus, and its germination in the councils composed mainly of bishops, that had already been held from time to time. But it was through the influence of Cyprian—as shown, for instance, in his contest with Stephen of Rome on the subject of re-baptism—that the significance and utility of the council of bishops were demonstrated as never before. And it was through him that, as never before, not simply the council

¹Augustine, "On Baptism," against the Donatists, II. 3.

²Ep. LXVIII. (LXVI.), 8. Cf. "The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole ('On the Unity of the Church,' 5), and 'the Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers.'" ("To the Lapsed," Ep. XXVI. (XXX II.), 1.)

of bishops but the *order* of bishops was exploited as the bond of unity and the constitutive element of the universal Church.¹ In a word, not only congregational but also intercongregational and catholic unity was declared to be essentially *episcopal*.²

Here a moment's pause, and a very brief question—What is now the Church? It used to be regarded as the Christian people—men and women, ministers and private members, all who met together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is now to be regarded as still, in a general or receptive or passive sense, the Christian people, but as in the vital, constitutive, positive sense, the bishops. From these officials proceed all unity, all interpretation of truth, all governmental authority and power, all sacramental grace. Henceforth Cyprian and his followers would have the Church described not as in Christ's people, but as more truly "*in the bishop*."

2. RECONCILIATION OF THE TWO IDEAS.

These, then, were the famous Carthaginian pastor's two leading ideas of church order—the independence of the individual bishop, and the episcopal bond of intercongregational and universal unity.

But the two ideas when brought into conjunction do not seem at first sight to make a perfect fit. For supposing the bishops to

¹"As the individual bishop had been pronounced indispensable to the existence of the individual community, so the episcopal order was now put forward as the absolute indefeasible representative of the universal Church. Synods of bishops indeed had been held repeatedly before; but under Cyprian's guidance they assumed a prominence which threw all existing precedents into the shade. . . . He acted throughout on the principle, distinctly asserted, that the existence of the episcopal office was not a matter of practical advantage or ecclesiastical rule, or even of apostolic sanction, but an absolute incontrovertible decree of God." (Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry," pp. 106, 107.)

²"On the Unity of the Church," *passim*. "Not where the Christian experience is, the gift of a holy spirit in men's lives, which had been the bond and condition everywhere at first; not where the Scriptures are; not where the apostolic faith and the rightful bishop are, as with Irenæus; but where the rightful bishop is, there, and there alone, is Christ." (Moore, "The New Testament in the Christian Church," pp. 249, 250.)

disagree concerning a matter of importance—say, some question of administration—there being no governing power above them, how shall they be held together, and the Church held together in them? Cyprian's answer would have been that they ought not to disagree; and he urges them so to act that they "may also *prove* the episcopate itself to be one and undivided.¹ If, however, there should be a serious division among the bishops, as in fact must and did occur, let a council be called to decide the question; and even though some should refuse to be governed by its decision, let them be borne with and permitted to pursue their own course, and thus kept in the unity of the Church.²

If, indeed, a bishop should become thoroughly heretical in doctrine, schismatic in administration, or corrupt in character, he would be regarded, we may suppose, as having thereby virtually forsaken the Church, and be refused communion with his brethren. In fact, Cyprian even taught that the congregation of a morally corrupt bishop ought to reject him.³

Thus might the two principles of episcopal independence and ecclesiastical unity be at least imperfectly harmonized.

An analogue may be found in modern Congregationalism—for ecclesiastical extremes, like others, do sometimes meet. Under this form of government, each church is independent of all

¹"On the Unity of the Church," 5.

²"Some of the bishops here in our province thought that peace was not to be granted to adulterers. . . . Still they did not withdraw from the assembly of the co-bishops, nor break the unity of the Catholic Church, . . . so that, because that by some peace was granted to adulterers, he who did not grant it should be separated from the Church. While the bond of concord remains, and the undivided sacrament of the Catholic Church endures, every bishop directs and disposes his own acts, and will have to give account of his purposes to the Lord." (Ep. LI. (LV.), 21.)

³"Nor let the people flatter themselves that they can be free from the contagion of sin, while communicating with a priest [bishop] who is a sinner, and yielding their consent to the unjust and unlawful episcopacy of their overseer. . . . On which account a people obedient to the Lord's precepts, and fearing God, ought to separate themselves from a sinful prelate, and not to associate themselves with the sacrifices of a sacrilegious priest, especially since they themselves have the power of choosing worthy priests or of rejecting unworthy ones." (Ep. LXVII. (LVII.), 3.)

the rest. Nevertheless the churches meet together, through representatives, in council; and while a church which declines to act in accordance with a conciliar decision may still maintain its standing in the communion of its sister churches, yet it may, on the other hand, for this or any other supposedly sufficient reason, be refused representation in councils and cut off from ecclesiastic fellowship. We need only substitute *bishop* for *church*, in such a description, in order to have a correct picture of the Cyprianic episcopacy.

3. THE BISHOP'S OFFICE AN IMMEDIATE GIFT FROM GOD.

And now what, according to Cyprian, is the basis of episcopal power? On what does it rest? The answer is: It is an immediate gift from God. Each bishop, on entering upon his office, is invested with this power from on high. Just as Christ gave it to the original Apostles; so does he now give it, generation after generation, to the bishops. Immediately from him do they receive it, and only to him are they accountable for the use of it.¹

The present Emperor of Germany is reported to have said: "We Hohenzollerns accept our crown only from Heaven, and are responsible to Heaven only for the performance of our duties." Similar has been the claim of many another monarch of both pagan and Christian nations. Similar was Cyprian's claim for his episcopal "crown"—and later the claim for the Roman "triple crown," which still represents the most imposing and powerful theocratic institute of the ages.

The bishops, indeed, are successors of the Apostles in a reg-

¹Writing about Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, Cyprian says that he "was made bishop by the judgment of God and of his Christ" (Ep. LI. (LV.) 8), and writing to him he speaks of "the sublime and divine power of governing the Church," and says: "Undoubtedly there are bishops made not by the will of God, but they are such as are made outside the Church." (Ep. LIV. (LIX.), 5.)

"So that the Lord who condescends to elect and appoint for himself priests [bishops] in his Church may protect them also when elected and appointed by his good will and help, inspiring them to govern," etc. (Ep. XLIV. (XLVIII.), 4 Cf. LXIV. (III.), 3; LXVIII. (LXVI.), 9.)

ular line of ordinations. At least, in one passage (there is probably no other¹) Cyprian makes such an assertion: "Christ, who says to the Apostles, and thereby to all chief rulers, *who by vicarious ordination succeed to the Apostles*, 'He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me and Him that sent me.'"² But we should misinterpret his teaching to suppose that it was here that Cyprian would chiefly rest his monarchical claim. That upon which he lays the main stress, in repeated assertion, is the bishop's *present and immediate* investiture with the "sublime and divine power of governing."³ As a recent scholarly writer has expressed it, Cyprian taught not so much a succession *from* the Apostles as a succession *of* apostles.⁴

Something more as to the Cyprianic episcopate. It was a priesthood. The bishop was a sacrificing and mediating priest. He offered the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice;⁵ he could remit sins;⁶ he imparted the Holy Spirit to the soul in baptism,⁷ and could authorize presbyters and deacons to do the same. True, the presbyter was himself a priest, but so

¹Ep. LXXV. (LXIX.) 5 looks in this direction: "While the true shepherd remains and presides over the Church of God by successive ordination," etc.

²Ep. LXVIII. (LXVI.), 4

³Ep. XLIV. (XLVIII.), 4; LXIV. (III.), 3; LXVIII. (LXVI.), 9.

⁴"This thought of apostolic succession which is to be found in Cyprian was very different from what is seen both in Irenæus and in Tertullian. It was not a succession from the apostles, but a succession of apostles. The historical matter-of-fact succession disappeared, and the conception became a creation of dogmatic imagination. The thought of succession from the apostles, in a line of office-bearers creating a vital connection between the generations as they passed, was scarcely in Cyprian's mind." (Lindsay, "The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries," p. 311.)

⁵Ep. LXII. (LXIII.), *passim*.

⁶Ep. LXVIII. (LXVI.), 5; LXII. (LXIII.), 8; LXXII. (LXXIII.), 7; LXIX. (LXXI.), 3.

⁷"Whence we perceive that only they who are set over the Church and established in the gospel law and in the ordinance of the Lord are allowed to baptize and to give remission of sins; but that without, nothing can either be bound or loosed, where there is none who can either bind or loose anything." (Ep. LXXII. (LXXIII.), 7.) See also IX. (XVI.), 2.

dependent on the bishop as hardly to have an independent right to the title; which seems to be the reason that when Cyprian speaks of God's "priests," it is the bishops only that he has in mind.

Was not the bishop's priesthood, indeed, the central secret and source of his power? In making him a priest, did not Almighty God clothe him with supreme authority? If it was said of the priests and judges of Israel, as Cyprian more than once quoted to prove his autocratic position, "The man that doeth presumptuously, in not hearkening unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die,"¹ how can the man who refuses to obey the priest of the New Covenant, with the sacraments of salvation in his hands, and the word of ecclesiastical absolution or condemnation on his lips, hope to be saved?

So, without the bishop there was no Church, and out of the Church there was no salvation.²

4. ESTIMATE OF THE CYPRIANIC EPISCOPATE.

Such was Cyprianism. And now should it be asked, What proof of these stupendous claims was forthcoming? the answer must be, None of any worth. They were simply dogmatic conceptions, representing what seemed to their propagandist to be needful and true, but resting on no proper historic or exegetic grounds. They were the ideas of a Roman lawyer, familiar with the governmental spirit and forms of the Empire, made a bishop only two or three years after his baptism. He was not a careful reasoner nor a Bible scholar, but more of a zealot than of a student—an ecclesiastic ready to believe and utilize such doctrines as lent themselves to the administration of a strong imperial government in the Church and an externalist preparing the way for the substitution of penance for repentance. As to

¹Deut. xvii. 12.

²"He who does not hold this unity does not hold God's law, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation." ("On the Unity of the Church," 6.)

exegesis, Cyprian founds an argument for baptism on the words of Jesus, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;"¹ for the unity of the Church, on the seamless robe for which the soldiers cast lots at the Cross;² for the ordination of bishops by a Divine decree, on the assurance that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the heavenly Father;³ and for the permanency of the priesthood, on the command of our Lord to the cleansed leper: "Go, show thyself to the priest." Such interpretations of Scripture are quite worthy to be classed with that of the popes in making the words of Simon Peter, "Behold, here are two swords,"⁴ represent the power of the pope over both ecclesiastical and civil rulers; or that of the Tractarian divine who explained the Wicket Gate in "The Pilgrim's Progress" as signifying baptism, and the Palace Beautiful as the Lord's Supper; or that of the evangelic preacher who from the text, "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man, he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich,"⁵ drew the theme that he who enjoys the means of grace shall be poor in spirit and he that loves the provisions of the gospel shall not be rich in his own esteem.

But such exegesis, bringing reason and truth into contempt, is not adapted to confirm one's confidence in either the intellectual discernment or the honesty of a teacher. Truly a good man with rich administrative gifts may limp in logic and fall headlong in exegesis; but he must be content by so much to lose authority as an expounder for all after ages of so scriptural a subject as the nature of the Ecclesia of Jesus Christ. For he could easily enough make the Scriptures of either the Old or the New Covenant describe it as anything whatever that he believed it, or might wish it, to be.

Here, however, was an ecclesiastical unity enforced by the most awful sanctions conceivable—salvation for those within, and eternal damnation for all outsiders. A purely Christward

¹Ep. LXII. (LXIII.), 8.

²"On the Unity of the Church," 7.

³Ep. LIV. (LIX.), 5; LXVIII. (LXVI.), 1.

⁴Luke xxii. 38.

⁵Prov. xxi. 17.

unity? By no means: the mediation of the Church was over-emphasized and despiritualized. Practically the Church was offered to men instead of the Saviour. With whatever high and martyrlike sincerity maintained, Cyprian's was an external, legal, organic, priestly unity, unauthorized and despotic, compelling the sometimes resistant but often pliant and unintelligent will into submission. It has borne fruit through the subsequent ages after its kind.

"God be praised!" exclaimed Cyprian when the proconsul pronounced upon him as a Christian the sentence of death by the sword. And doubtless his glorious martyrdom added an influence of its own to the propagation and perpetuity of his dogmatic beliefs. But surely it is a fact most tragical that a man may seriously misconceive the truth or pervert the institutions of the holy Master for whom he is gladly willing to lay down his life.

Let us now dwell a moment, by way of *résumé*, upon the three most distinguished names that mark the growth of the episcopate during the first century and a quarter of its history: Ignatius, in the early part of the second century, who stands for *the bishop as the congregational center of unity*; Irenæus, about the close of this century, who stands for *the bishop as the center of orthodox teaching*; Cyprian, about the middle of the next century, who stands for *the bishop as the center of unity for the whole Church*.

5. RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF DIOCESAN EPISCOPACY.

We have here reached the limit of the episcopal office in one direction. It has never asserted any higher order of prerogatives. Indeed, how could it? But the administrative *breadth* of the individual bishop's official claim must now be considered. How many congregations were included in his jurisdiction? This question will require us to go back to the beginning and mark the origin and progress of diocesan episcopacy.

In the time of Ignatius, and for many years afterwards, there

was no such officer in the Church as we of to-day are familiar with under the name of bishop. The bishop, as already indicated, was simply the pastor, or ruler, of the local congregation. Outside the congregation he had no authority, nor was he himself subject to any outside authority. In brief, church polity was at that time beyond controversy, neither diocesan nor synodical, but congregational. It is also worth while to notice that the Church in those days was chiefly in the city and its immediate neighborhood; the villagers (*pagani*), not yet Christianized, were still for the most part pagans.¹

What we wish to learn is the process by which the pastor, or congregational bishop, became *pastor pastorum*, or diocesan bishop. Here, as often in our study, some mental patience will be called for; because no one short answer can possibly represent the facts. The process of pastoral expansion was at least four-fold.

(1) As new congregations were formed from time to time in a city—as, for instance, in Rome or Alexandria—and its vicinity, the bishop of the mother church would appoint some presbyter—or presbyters, for as late as the third century it was the rule that there should be at least two—to take charge of each of these outlying congregations. Meanwhile he himself not only retained his own original charge, but also exercised a general superintendence over these others. The arrangement was similar to that of a strong city church in the present day which has established one or more chapels (so-called “chapels of ease”), and retains them under its own general supervision—a single pastor for all, with such assistants as may be necessary.

Out of this development, which seems to have started in the latter part of the second century, arose the first form of what

¹Not that in all localities village and country Christians were rare in those days. As early as the year 112, or thereabout, Pliny the Younger, in his famous letter to Trajan, says: “The contagion of that superstition has penetrated not the cities only but the villages and the country.” Persecutions, also, had a tendency to spread Christianity in the country, both by causing Christians to seek refuge there from their enemies, and by the condemnation of many others to go as laborers in the mines.

was afterwards called diocesan episcopacy. As we had occasion to notice in connection with the presbyterate,¹ the relation between the bishop's own particular congregation and the other congregations of his district was at first very close. He appointed all pastors, or presiding presbyters; he called them together in council; he sent the consecrated bread and wine every Sunday to these congregations for the celebration of the Lord's Supper; he must lay his hands upon all baptized persons before their baptism should be regarded as complete.

But this extreme closeness of relation between the bishop in the mother church and the presbyter in the dependent church was not perpetuated. The presiding presbyters gained the right to consecrate the sacramental bread and wine in their own churches; and their membership in the bishop's council became a mere nominal matter. The bishop, however, still appointed these presiding presbyters, and required them, as well as the presbyters of his own congregation, to present him reports of their work.

(2) When at a somewhat later period—say, toward the close of the third century—the country people (*heath-en*) had been converted in large numbers, and gathered into congregations in the smaller towns and villages, these congregations, as a rule, had each its own bishop: which of course is simply saying that they had each its own pastor.² But in some cases the congregations were grouped under the charge of a country bishop (*χορεπίσκοπος*). A similar modern arrangement might be found in an American Methodist circuit.

The country bishops, however, were under the jurisdiction of the city bishops—not coequal with them. Nor did their office ever rise to any notable prominence or influence. Appearing first in Asia Minor, and afterwards in many places, East and West, its place was taken in the West, after a few centuries, by

¹See pp. 219, 220.

²"In the only half-converted province of North Africa, 470 episcopal towns are known by name." (Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," p. 79.)

the archdiaconate; and so it passed away. In the Churches of the East it still has a place; though it does not seem to have existed continuously from the early times.

(3) In Gaul and Spain, in the seventh and eighth centuries, wealthy landowners would build chapels on their estates and appoint priests to take charge of the congregation.¹ These congregations, accordingly, were independent of episcopal control, and indeed of all other control except that of the lord of the estate.

Now it is evident that this state of things was not likely to be kept up very long. For the landlord was not competent to preside over ecclesiastical affairs. And as to the ministers who would accept positions at his hand, they were men who were ordained, according to a loose custom of the time, *absoluté*—that is to say, without being assigned to any particular congregation. As might have been expected, they proved to be unfit, self-seeking men. In these circumstances, church discipline came to naught.

On the other hand, there was the bishop in the county town, with his strong church, reaching out to extend his jurisdiction, and to gather the whole Christian population under his own supreme authority and care. Besides, the sovereign—this was certainly true of that most dread sovereign, Charlemagne—favored and even commanded the centralization of ecclesiastic rule. Thus it came to pass that before the close of the eighth century, all these independent congregations were brought into subordination to the bishop of the county town. Thus the county became a diocese.²

(4) Anglo-Saxon England and the uncivilized tribes of Germany were converted, and subjected to the control of Rome, chiefly by two missionaries—Augustine and Boniface. These

¹It is through a somewhat similar custom in early English history that it has come to pass that, even unto the present time, very many "livings" are at the disposal of private patrons. "The missionaries became settled clergy. The township or group of townships which fell within the holding or patronage of an English noble or landowner became the parish and his chaplain its parish priest." (Green, "The Making of England," p. 369.)

²Hatch, "Growth of Church Institutions," p. 43 ff.

two men were appointed by the pope as missionary bishops in their respective fields of labor. Accordingly, as they succeeded in Christianizing the people, they organized them into congregations under a centralized episcopal government. In England this organization was perfected—a number of bishoprics being grouped about the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury by Theodore of Canterbury—in the latter part of the seventh century.

In these four ways, then, it came about that the pastor of a single congregation became the superintendent of all the congregations of a certain district. And this was the evolution of the diocesan bishop.

6. RITUAL EPISCOPAL FUNCTIONS.

In addition to his superintendency, there were certain ritual functions which the bishop appropriated.

Of these the chief was *ordination*. Who were the ordainers, admitting the elected person into office through the accustomed ceremony of laying on of hands with prayer, during the apostolic age? So far as our information goes, they were Apostles,¹ delegates of Apostles,² or an Apostle together with presbyters.³ Who were the ordainers for some time thereafter? Here very little information is available. It is reasonable to suppose that, under the single episcopate, from the outset the bishop would take a leading part in this consecrating of men to the ministry of the gospel. It would be well-nigh inevitable, would it not? There is evidence, however, that even as late as the fourth century presbyters, occasionally at least, exercised this function. Cyprian complains of the schismatic presbyter Novatian: "He it is who, without my leave or knowledge, of his factiousness and ambition, appointed his attendant Felicissimus a deacon:" from which complaint it is a fair inference that with the bishop's "leave" Novatian was competent to appoint, or ordain, a deacon.⁴ Also, the Council of Ancyra (314) forbade country bishops and city presbyters to ordain either presbyters or deacons

¹Acts vi. 6; xiv. 23.

²Titus i. 5.

³2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 14.

⁴Ep. XLVIII. (LII.), 2.

"in another parish;"¹ which implies that up to that time it had not been prohibited. Again, in the city of Alexandria, the presbyters who elected the bishop out of their own number also conducted him to the episcopal chair; and this seems to have been the only ceremony of his induction into office.²

But as the scriptural conception of ordination underwent its change from that of appointment to office of a man already qualified by the Holy Spirit to that of his qualification through the laying on of hands itself,³ and at the same time the bishop came to be accepted as the successor of the original Apostles, it was felt that he alone should be empowered to admit men into the Christian ministry. So from the fourth century onward ordinations were positively restricted to episcopal hands.⁴

In the Church of the West another exclusive function of the bishop was *confirmation*. This rite originated in the imposition of hands as an accompaniment of baptism. Whoever baptized also laid hands upon the subject, at the same time, in blessing, after what was supposed, not very intelligently, to be apostolic example.⁵ But the bishop claimed to be the most proper administrator of baptism; and as it was impracticable for him to

¹It is difficult fully to understand the Canon (XIII.), which runs as follows: "It is not lawful for Chorepiscopoi to ordain presbyters or deacons, and most assuredly presbyters of a city, without the commission of the bishop given in writing, in another parish."

²Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," p. 134; Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry," pp. 86-88.

³See p. 205 ff.

⁴See, for example, Jerome "To Evangelus," 1: "For what except ordination does a bishop do that a presbyter does not?"

⁵Acts viii. 14-17.

Cf. rubric in the Order for the Ministration of Baptism in the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South: "The minister may, at his discretion, lay hands on the subject, accompanying the act with a suitable invocation."

"The narrative of the Acts elsewhere assures us that the Apostles laid their hands on all Christians after their baptism, in order by this means to impart to them that gift of the Holy Ghost which is the essence of the Christian life." (Gore, "The Church and the Ministry," pp. 235, 236.) One hardly knows how to take such an assertion seriously from the pen of a New Testament student or even reader.

administer it in all cases, he reserved for himself, in case of baptism by a presbyter or a deacon, the laying on of hands, without which the baptism was regarded as incomplete. Accordingly, as soon as convenient, in his visitations in the diocese, the bishop completed the baptismal ceremony by the laying on of his hands. And thus arose the episcopal rite of confirmation.¹

Moreover, it was the teaching of the day that baptism was a washing away of sin and thus a preparation for death, while confirmation was an impartation of the Holy Spirit and thus a preparation for growth in grace and the living of the Christian life.²

In the Church of the East the parish priest has always given confirmation, and in immediate connection with baptism.

Still another ritual function of the episcopacy was the *consecration of church edifices*.

Such, then, had the episcopal office become. In the prelatic churches, such in its two most prominent functions—namely, governing and ordaining—it still remains.

As to the personal qualifications of bishops and their mode of living, the diversity in different ages and countries has been as

¹Smith and Cheatham's Dictionary of Christian Antiquities, Art. "Confirmation."

"I do not deny that it is the practice of the churches, in the case of those who, living far from the greater towns, have been baptized by presbyters and deacons, for the bishop to visit them, and by the laying on of hands invoke the Holy Spirit upon them." (Jerome, "Dialog. against the Luciferians," c. 9.) Jerome adds that this practice is "more by way of honoring the episcopate than for any compulsory law." "Otherwise," he says, "if the Holy Spirit descends only at the bishop's prayer, they are greatly to be pitied who in isolated homes, or in forts, or retired places, after being baptized by the presbyters and deacons, have fallen asleep before the bishop's visitation."

²"As he [Novatian] seemed about to die, he received baptism by affusion. . . . And when he was healed of his sickness, he did not receive the other things which it is necessary to have, according to the canon of the Church, even the being sealed [confirmed] by the bishop. And as he did not receive this, how could he receive the Holy Spirit?" (Letter of Cornelius, in Eusebius, H. E. VI. 43, 14.)

great as can easily be imagined. It has ranged from densest ignorance to the best learning of the schools, from shameless and criminal self-seeking to the heights of Christian integrity, from pinching asceticism to princely luxury.

Besides, the alliance of Church and State offered the bishop long ago an opportunity, which seems to have been all too eagerly accepted, to assume certain civil and even military functions. There were times in the Middle Ages, for instance, when the episcopal court held jurisdiction not only over the clergy, both as to ecclesiastical and civil cases, but also to a large extent over the people. Fines, scourging, imprisonment were some of the punishments inflicted. "The spiritual courts," says Hallam, "usurped, under sophistical pretenses, almost the whole administration of justice."¹

There were also times when bishops (and abbots, who sometimes even excelled the bishops in power) took command of troops, and fighting with their own hands, according to the custom of the day, led them to bloody battle against the heretic or the Infidel. In many such instances these ecclesiastico-military leaders were feudal lords; for perhaps one-half the land of Western Europe was then in possession of the Church. So the bishops, like any other vassals, must furnish their quota of soldiers and gird on their own swords in time of war, at the command of their prince. It might be one of the first services they were called upon to perform after ordination. Of some of them special deeds of prowess are recorded. Many doubtless were both dauntless and sincere. Some died on the battlefield. But all were dishonoring the name and office of bishop in the Church of God. Their fatal blunder was not unlike that of Urban II., who cried, in his impassioned preaching of the First Crusade: "It is the will of God. Let these words be your war cry when you unsheathe your swords." They had borrowed his sword from the False Prophet.

¹"Europe During the Middle Ages" (1885), Vol. I., p. 625.

X.

THE BISHOP: ORIGIN OF HIS OFFICE.

THERE is another episcopal question, which, unlike some that have already held our thoughts for a time, has a far more than historic interest. It is the question of the origin of the single episcopate. Innumerable are the discussions which it has evoked; and the well-worn arguments of the last three hundred years, in the hands of all grades of controvertists, from the feeblest to the most formidable, are still doing service. Of late, however, it is asserted that fresh discoveries, which call for some reconstruction of the older views, have been made in this part of the ecclesiologic field. What these are we may see toward the end of the chapter.

The beliefs that are held as to the origin of the single episcopate vitally concern the unity of organized Christianity in the world to-day. For a satisfactory settlement of the question would remove one of the chief obstacles to the federation of the churches. To search out, then, the facts and the truth concerning this matter must be no less than a duty. By all means let knowledge have its rightful share in determining belief. And it will be so increasingly as the Christian centuries come on.

I. THEORY OF ELEVATION FROM THE PRESBYTERATE.

Before the close of the second century, the single episcopate had been established generally in the churches. Whence did it originate?

Four attempted solutions of the problem have been offered.

The first is, that the office of bishop and that of presbyter were originally one and the same office under two interchangeable names; but when one of the presbyter-bishops was elected to a presidency over his fellows, his power tended to increase and the name *bishop* ("overseer") came to be restricted to him only. And the others were thenceforth called simply presbyters.

Let us recall the familiar proof-texts which seem to show the two titles to be used interchangeably. When Paul had his interview with "the elders (*πρεσβυτέρους*) of the church" in Ephesus, he charged them: "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops (*ἐπισκόπους*)."¹ These elders, then, were at the same time bishops. Again, in the pastoral letter which he writes to his friend and fellow-laborer, Titus, he says: "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and appoint elders (*πρεσβυτέρους*) in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, . . . for the bishop (*ἐπίσκοπος*) must be blameless."² To appoint elders, then, was to appoint bishops.

Now it might be supposed that only the word "elder" in these passages is used as a title—the word "bishop" being a common term descriptive of the work which a presbyter must do. And this would be no unreasonable supposition. The terms *προϊστάμενοι* ("they that are over you")³ and *ἡγούμενοι* ("they that have the rule over you")⁴ are undoubtedly used in this mere descriptive, or unofficial, sense. In fact, the word "bishop" itself is, at least in its participial form, used by the apostle Peter in an unofficial sense: "Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight (*ἐπισκόπουντες*)."⁵ Also, when the term is applied to our Lord himself—"the Shepherd and Bishop (*ἐπίσκοπος*)"⁶—it seems unlikely that any official meaning of the word is in the writer's mind. Why, then, may it not be so when this same word is used in Acts and in Titus?

But let us turn to another New Testament writing. Opening the letter to the Philippians, we read: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Beyond a doubt, both terms in such a passage have the appearance of being used as official titles; and except on the supposition that presbyters are addressed in this

¹Acts xx. 17, 28.

²Titus i. 5, 7.

³1 Pet. v. 2. *Ἐπισκόπουντες*, however, is omitted here by the present authorities in textual criticism.

⁴1 Thess. v. 12.

⁵Heb. xiii. 17.

⁶1 Pet. ii. 25.

salutation under the name of bishops, we should have to adopt the extremely unlikely conclusion that either presbyters did not exist at Philippi—while on the other hand there were more than one bishop—or for some unimaginable reason they were ignored in the salutation of the founder and chief pastor of the church.

Or, again, how shall we understand the third chapter of First Timothy, where the qualifications of bishops and deacons are laid down? For here too both terms have all the appearance of official titles; and unless bishops are the same as presbyters, there is an unaccountable omission of presbyters and their qualifications.

Besides, presbyters are mentioned later in this same epistle as rulers of the church and entitled to a maintenance,¹ as not to be proceeded against in a matter of discipline except on the testimony of two or three witnesses,² and as not to be rebuked by the young pastor, but exhorted as fathers.³ These references seem more consistent with the idea that presbyters are the same as the bishops of the former chapter than with the idea of their being a third class of officers, unmentioned by the side of the bishops and deacons when the qualifications for office are enumerated.

Why, then, it may be asked, are they not called bishops here also? Possibly because they are here spoken of in such a way—namely, as entitled to maintenance, to be dealt with most considerately if accused of misconduct, and not to be rebuked by the young pastor—as would make the venerated name of presbyter the more fitting word.

However, the question of the official or the unofficial use of the terms is not essential. For, at all events, the opinion that these terms denote the same class or company of persons is now held with practical unanimity (barring some recent dissent to be noticed a few pages later) by New Testament scholars.⁴

¹1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

²1 Tim. v. 19.

³1 Tim. v. 1.

⁴“It is a fact now generally recognized by theologians of all shades of opinion, that in the language of the New Testament the same officer in the Church is called indifferently ‘bishop’ (*ἐπίσκοπος*) and ‘elder’ or ‘presbyter’

In the earliest sub-apostolic literature, likewise, the interchangeableness of the two terms, bishop and presbyter, appears.¹

But it came to pass that, for the sake of a stronger unity and a more efficient executive, the presbyter-bishops elected a president of their body, who thus became at the same time president of the whole congregation. There was a special demand, as we have seen, for some such personal bond of congregational unity—because of strifes within the Church and heresies threatening from without. And this presiding officer was appropriately called bishop or overseer, while the others were retained about him as a council of presbyters.²

(*πρεσβύτερος*).” (Lightfoot, Commentary on Philippians, Excursus on “The Synonyms of ‘Bishop’ and ‘Presbyter.’”)

“The admissions of both medieval and modern writers of almost all schools of theological opinion have practically removed this from the list of disputed questions.” (Hatch, “Organization of Early Christian Churches,” p. 39, n.)

“At first the supreme authority in the Church was vested in the Apostles, and the titles of Priest and Bishop were both used of the same order.” (The Anglican Ordinal, annotated by Bloomfield Jackson, p. 26. Cf. also Blunt, Dictionary of Historical and Doctrinal Theology, Art. “Bishops.”)

This identity is admitted by Bishop Gore, “The Church and the Ministry,” pp. 223-4, 244-5.

¹For our sin will not be small, if we eject from the *oversight* (*ἐπίσκοπή*) those who have blamelessly and holily fulfilled its duties. Blessed are those *presbyters* who, having fulfilled their course before now, have obtained a fruitful and perfect departure [from this world], for they have no fear lest any one deprive them of the place now appointed them.” (Clement, “To the Corinthians,” 44.) The Didache, as we have seen, speaks of bishops and deacons, but not of presbyters. The testimony of Hermas is to the same effect. (See “The Pastor,” Sim. IX. 26, 27; Vis. II. 4; III. 5.) Polycarp, also, speaks of presbyters and deacons, but not of bishops. (Ep. to Philippians, 5, 6.)

²“The objection to this theory is that it throws no light on the difficulties which are encountered in the effort to trace the origin of the Christian ministry; while it raises even greater difficulties by making the transition inexplicable in the writings of Ignatius, where bishops and presbyters are sharply distinguished.” (Allen, “Christian Institutions,” p. 79.). I do not feel the force of this objection. Unless one insist that all is darkness so long as two names, even in a formative state of the Church, are used to designate the same officer, the theory in question does throw light on the

Jerome, "earliest and greatest of ecclesiastical antiquaries," is the first notable name that stands for such a belief. This "antiquary" teaches that, according to the New Testament, "presbyters are the same as bishops," that the single episcopate arose "when subsequently one presbyter was chosen to preside over the rest," and that this was done in the interest of unity—"to remedy schism, and to prevent each individual from rending the Church of Christ by drawing it to himself."¹ It is not to be hastily supposed, however, that Jerome had any sources of information on this subject except such as are still open to us all. At any rate, the argument by which he sustains his position is purely exegetic. It is the New Testament argument—substantially as given above.

But the seeming reasonableness of this theory has made greatly in his favor. The presbyters—so the reasoning has run—in any important meeting, unless they unaccountably chose to make themselves an exception to all ordinary rules of procedure, must have had a chairman. And instead of selecting this presiding officer for each separate meeting, they might very naturally make the office permanent. In fact, there was an inherent probability that they would do so. Then, as the need of a stronger or more centralized government was felt (whether wisely or unwisely), this chairman of the council, or board, of presbyters would represent that need. He would be charged with the supreme administrative responsibility. For where was a more suitable man likely to be found? Not among the other presbyters or the deacons or the laity. And what more suitable application of names than to fix upon this presiding presbyter the exclusive title of bishop, or overseer (which in itself indicates his office), and let his council simply retain the title of presbyters (which in itself means men of age and experience)?²

origin of the Christian ministry; and the third or the second or even the first quarter of the second century has not been shown to be too soon for the single pastorship to appear in certain churches.

¹Ep. to Evangelus, I.

²Ramsay, in "The Church in the Roman Empire" (p. 367 ff.), offers a

But whether through a temporary chairmanship or in some other way, there are good reasons to believe that the bishop did come into his office by elevation from the presbyterate—that “one presbyter was chosen to preside over the rest,” and at the same time over the whole congregation.

This view is strongly supported by the subsequent use of the terms “bishop” and “presbyter.” It has been shown that these two terms were at first interchangeable. Later they were not interchangeable, for all presbyters were not then bishops. Nevertheless, bishops were still, for a long time, called presbyters. We have already noticed that Irenæus, for example, at the close of the second century, still speaks of the bishops as presbyters.¹ And in other writers, both contemporary with Irenæus and later, a similar application of the titles may be seen.²

Of like significance is the fact that, even as late as the fifth century, when a bishop wrote to a presbyter it was customary to address him as a “brother presbyter.”³

Now, if the single episcopate had been from the beginning a distinct order, or office, why should the bishop be so commonly called, both by others and by himself, a presbyter? But on the supposition that he began as the first among his brother presbyters, it is not difficult to see how, even after this new form of office became prevalent, the old title might be freely applied to him still.

somewhat different view of the development of the *ἐπίσκοπος* out of the council of *πρεσβύτεροι*. His idea is that when the presbyters undertook to do a certain work they would appoint one of their number to oversee it, and this man would be called, accordingly, the overseer (*ἐπίσκοπος*, bishop) for the time. Inasmuch, then, as any presbyter might at any time serve temporarily as a bishop, the two names were used convertibly. But as some one presbyter would inevitably show peculiar aptitude for overseeing the work undertaken by the council, he would be kept permanently in this office of oversight; and thus the single overseer (bishop) became a permanent officer. This, whether true or not, is at least ingenious.

¹See p. 334. ²Lightfoot, “The Christian Ministry,” pp. 84-86.

³“Even in the fourth and fifth centuries, when the independence and power of the episcopate had reached its maximum, it was still customary for a bishop in writing to a presbyter to address him as ‘fellow-presbyter,’ thus bearing testimony to a substantial identity of office.” (*Ibid.*, p. 85.)

Another proof is worthy of mention. There is an actual and conspicuous example of the making of a bishop by elevation from the presbyterate. As a matter of historic fact, it was the custom, through a period of two hundred years, in one of the chief churches of the early centuries, the church in Alexandria, for the presbyters, on the death of a bishop, to meet together and select his successor out of their own number.¹

Now as to the exact date at which the single episcopate began, no certain knowledge has yet been gained. Which is not surprising, when we remember that it arose in that period of early church history concerning one of whose features all investigators are absolutely well agreed—its obscurity. The office would seem to have been instituted at different dates in different localities: first of all perhaps in Asia Minor. And inasmuch as Ignatius in his letters to the Asian churches does not speak of it as a new institution, the opinion has been held that it was established there before the close of the first century, and that in this event it had the sanction of the apostle John, whose last years were spent in the city of Ephesus.

Indeed, Clement of Alexandria, Irenæus, and Tertullian, writing a hundred years later, declare their acceptance of a tradition—"handed down and committed to the custody of memory"—to the effect that the first bishops of Asia were appointed by John.²

¹"For even at Alexandria, from the time of Mark the evangelist until the episcopate of Heraclas and Dionysius, the presbyters always named as bishop one of their own number, chosen by themselves and set in a more exalted position, just as an army elects a general, or as deacons appoint one of themselves whom they know to be diligent, and call him archdeacon." (Jerome, Ep. to Evangelus, 1.)

²"Listen to a tale which is not a tale but a narrative, handed down and committed to the custody of memory, about the apostle John. For when on the tyrant's death he returned to Ephesus from the Isle of Patmos, he went away, being invited, to the contiguous territories of the nations, here to appoint bishops, there to set in order whole churches, there to ordain such as were marked out by the Spirit." (Clement of Alexandria, *Quis Dives*, 42.)

"For although Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, the order of the bishops [probably the "angels" of the Seven Churches of the Revelation] when traced

The tradition may be true. But we are not here on historic ground.

2. THEORY OF AN ORIGINAL DIFFERENCE.

About twenty-five years ago an almost wholly new theory of the single bishop's origin began to challenge attention. It has engaged the serious consideration of all students of the subject—though, possibly, less because of its intrinsic merits than for the sake of the great scholars' names under which it was put forth.

According to this theory, the office of bishop and that of presbyter were not originally one and the same. On the contrary, from the very beginning of their official existence the bishop had charge of the finances of the congregation and the conduct of public worship, being assisted in the performance of his duties by the deacons, while the presbyter had charge of discipline—with no assistants.

The germ out of which these ideas grew was furnished by the brilliant and lamented scholar, Dr. Edwin Hatch, in the Bampton Lectures for 1880 ("The Organization of the Early Christian Churches"). These Lectures emphasized very forcibly two quite distinct official functions in the early Church—namely, financial administration and discipline. They showed, more clearly perhaps than any previous treatise had shown, how imperative was the demand for the exercise of each of these two functions. And here, it is maintained, may be found the origin of the two titles, *bishop* and *presbyter*. That is to say, there was a body of officers in the Church who performed both these distinctly different functions; and hence they were called by two names. When the idea of financial administration was in the speaker's or writer's mind, they were called bishops; when the idea of discipline was

up to their origin, will rest upon John as their author." (Tertullian, "Against Marcion," lv. 5. See also his "Prescription against Heretics," 32.)

"But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also by apostles in Asia Minor appointed bishop of the church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth." (Irenæus, "Against Heresies," iii. 3, 4.)

Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry," pp. 56-60.

in his mind, they were called presbyters.¹ So far the Bampton Lecturer.

These Lectures, soon after their publication, fell into the hands of the famous young church historian, Dr. Adolph Harnack, who translated them into German, with additions of his own. Harnack, taking up the idea of the two ecclesiastical functions that Hatch had shown to be so important and so diverse as to give rise to the two names *bishop* and *presbyter*, carried it still further. He supposed not merely two functions, but two separate and distinct offices, from the first. True, the same person might fill both offices, and no doubt in many instances did so. In fact, the bishop had, as such, a seat in the council of presbyters; and hence all bishops were also presbyters, though we are not to suppose that all presbyters were bishops. But, however this might be, the two offices were not the same: the episcopate was always one office and the presbyterate another.²

The considerations that have been urged in favor of this view are, baldly stated, as follows: (1) It does away with the necessity

¹"They [church officers] were known individually as well as collectively by a name that was common to the members of the Jewish *συνεδρία* and to the members of the Greek *γερουσία* of Asia Minor—that of *πρεσβύτεροι*: they were also known—for I shall here assume what the weight of evidence has rendered practically indisputable—by the name *ἐπίσκοποι*. In their general capacity as a governing body they were known by names which were in current use for a governing body: in their special capacity as administrators of church funds they were known by a name which was in current use for such administrators." (Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," pp. 38, 39.)

²Harnack, in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Art. "Presbyter;" Discussions on the origin of the Christian ministry, in *The Expositor*, Vols. V. and VI., Third Series, by Harnack, Sanday, Salmon, Gore, and others.

"The presbyters form the council of the community, constituting its government; they have as their principal mission the care of souls—that is to say, a wholly moral and religious function. The bishops, on the contrary, direct the temporal (*materielle*) administration, inspect the general working of the society, see to the application of its statutes and regulations, and are brought by their very occupations to represent the community in its relations with the outside world; they have a function above all administrative and disciplinary. These differences are clear-cut enough not to permit us to identify the presbyters and the bishops." (Réville, "Les Origines de L'Episcopat," p. 313.)

of supposing two names for the same officer. (2) It is commended by the fact that bishops and deacons are uniformly mentioned together both in the New Testament and in subsequent writings, as if they were somehow closely associated, while the same thing is not true of presbyters and deacons. (3) The chief financial officer of certain non-Christian societies was called in some instances an *ἐπίσκοπος*, and thus the choice of this name for the ecclesiastic financial administrator may be the better accounted for. (4) Financial administration was a function of peculiar importance in the early Christian communities; for it meant the care of the numerous poor in an age when the Church was pre-eminently a charitable institution. Besides, it was intimately connected with the conduct of the love feast and the Lord's Supper, at which the people's offerings were made. Hence when the single ruler of the congregation appeared, it was to be expected that he should be called bishop rather than presbyter.

To most students of the Christian ministry, however, the argument seems to have proved unsatisfactory. Such considerations as the following have set themselves against it: (1) That there should be two appropriate names for the same officer, in a formative state of church organization, even if both are used more or less technically, needs no special explanation or apology. (2) The uniform use of the term *bishop*, instead of *presbyter*, in connection with deacons, may be without significance, though there is also a fitness in coupling the two ideas of overseer and servant. Besides, Polycarp ("To the Philippians," 5) does use the terms *presbyter* and *deacon* together. (3) The evidence for the contemporary non-Christian *ἐπίσκοπος* is not sufficient to make him more than "a rather shadowy and indefinite personage." Then, too, there are stronger reasons in favor of the adoption of the term from the Septuagint¹ than from the con-

¹As, for example, from such passages as the following: Numbers iv. 16, "Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, is overseer (*ἐπίσκοπος*): the oil for the light and the mixed incense and the daily sacrifice and the oil for anointing, the oversight (*ἡ ἐπισκοπή*) of all the tabernacle and whatsoever is in it;" xxxi. 14, "And Moses was angry with the overseers (*ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐπίσκοποις*) of the

temporaneous Græco-Roman sources. (4) Apart from the importance of the financial feature (upon which Hatch is inclined to lay an overemphasis) in the early Christian churches, *overseer* would be a more fitting name than *presbyter*, for the single ruler. (5) The Christian bishop was from the first much more "a superintendent of persons" than "an overseer of funds."

Moreover, the advocate of this theory will be asked to show how it is that presbyters as well as bishops are charged with financial oversight in the New Testament.¹

And still again, this theory has not offered an acceptable explanation of certain close associations of the titles *presbyter* and *bishop* in the New Testament. For example, no explanation that has been proposed leaves it otherwise than unclear how presbyters should in Acts xx. 17, 28 and Titus i. 5, 7 be distinctly called bishops.

Briefly, the older view promises to commend itself still as the truer.

3. THEORY OF ORIGINATION IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The third theory is the following: The bishop's office, which from the first was not a plural but a single episcopate, originated at the Lord's table. It was at first simply the office of the administration of the Lord's Supper and the distribution of the gifts there offered. And as to the presbyters, they were not office-bearers at all, but only the honored old men of the Christian community.²

In case of there being a charismatically gifted man (an apostle or prophet or teacher) in the congregation, it was he who presided at the Lord's table and distributed the gifts; but lacking such a leader, the congregation elected a bishop to supply the deficiency. Accordingly when the Didache says, for instance, "Ap-

forces." (2 Kings xi. 15; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12, 17; Neh. xi. 9, 14, 22; Isa. lx. 17; 1 Mac. i. 51.)

¹Acts xi. 30.

²This is the theory of Sohm in his "Kirchenrecht," as interpreted with some modification and development by Lowrie in "The Church and Its Organization."

point for yourselves bishops and deacons, . . . for they too render you the service of the prophets and teachers" (c. 15), the meaning is not that the bishops and deacons as well as the prophets and teachers teach, but that they as well as the prophets and teachers preside and administer at the Lord's Supper. But the bishop, taking the teacher's place there as an administrative officer, was also expected to take his place, if possible, as a teacher—to do such teaching as he might be capable of. Indeed, the administration of the Eucharist was itself regarded as a teaching. So the episcopal office was from the beginning an office of teaching, and not (as Harnack and some others have regarded it) a purely administrative office.

Now for the office of this teacher and administrator, this "bishop," there was always chosen one of the older men, which is all that is meant in the New Testament by presbyters of the Church.

Bishops and presbyters, then, did not fill one and the same office (as Jerome and Lightfoot would say), nor did they fill two different and disparate offices (as Harnack would say). There was but one office, that of bishop: the presbyters were simply the "honorables" of the Church, out of whose number the bishop was regularly elected.

Furthermore, inasmuch as only one bishop, or presiding officer at the Lord's table, was needed in a congregation, it is not to be supposed that there were more than one. And if it be asked, Why, then, are they spoken of in the New Testament in the plural (as they always are, with one apparent though not real exception—I Tim. iii. 2) the answer must be, that in all such cases it is implied that in the city to which reference is had (say, Ephesus or Philippi) there were more than one congregation, or church, and the bishops of them all collectively are intended.¹

¹This last idea is one of Lowrie's additions to the "Kirchenrecht:" "Sohm (pp. 116, 119) adds that as there were several bishops in one church no one of them could claim an exclusive right over the Eucharist. This may be a correct inference from the plurality of bishops; but, for my part, I find it difficult to conceive that such a state of things could have existed without disorder. . . . It seems to me more probable that the plurality of bishops

In criticism of this theory one must be permitted to say that far more is assumed or obtained through hint or suggestion than is proved.

Besides, the episcopal office, as here presented, is not large enough to fit the description of the bishop, that caretaker of the Church, in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

Again, it is distinctly stated in the New Testament that presbyters were appointed, formally set apart, to their office.¹ Hence they could not have been merely "honorables," unofficial elderly men. And the explanation offered—namely, that when presbyters are spoken of in these passages as appointed (*χειροτονέω, καθίστημι*) the meaning is that they, being already presbyters, were appointed bishops—is quite inadmissible. Neither the English translation nor the Greek text will bear such a construction.

Still again, the theory is attended with a serious difficulty in connection with the rise of diocesan episcopacy in the cities. For it implies that, in this case, the outlying congregations were originally presided over by bishops, all of whom gave up their offices, apparently without objection or complaint, to the presbyters who were later appointed in their place by the bishop of the mother congregation. Would they be likely to do so?

corresponded to a plurality of assemblies, which were more or less definitely distinguished." (Lowrie, "The Church and Its Organization," p. 367, n.)

¹Acts xiv. 23; Titus i. 5, 6.

²"I do not pretend to explain how the extra bishops were got rid of; but whatever the process may have been, the accomplishment could have hardly been more difficult than the subsequent absorption of the country bishops in the presbytery, and their deposition to a rank lower than that of the city presbyter." (Lowrie, "The Church and Its Organization," p. 307.) To the ordinary student of church history the former "accomplishment" would probably be considered decidedly more difficult than the latter.

"Starting with the assumption of the original identity of bishops and presbyters, the development of the single episcopate is left an insoluble mystery; for, leaving all facts aside, and giving the freest rein to the imagination, it is impossible to propose any plausible process whereby, in the short space of time allowed for the revolution, one of the bishops could have been elevated to a position relative to the rest like that of Christ above his Apostles." (*Ibid.*, p. 294.) To some minds a still freer rein to the imagination would be required in order to propose a plausible process in which in this and that

4. TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EPISCOPATE.

Here, then, are three theories put forward to explain the origin of the single episcopate—one very old, the other two of recent date. After the most careful and open-minded study, we shall probably be unable to see in either of the latter two the truth value which it possesses in the eyes of its advocates. But a leading fact to which they both call attention—namely, the significance of the Lord's Supper in the development of the episcopal office—seems worthy of greater emphasis than has been given it in the older theory.

Let us look at this for a moment. The Lord's Supper was the distinctive rite of Christian congregational worship. Moreover, it was fitting and expedient that some one person should preside at its celebration. Was it not the custom for the head of a family to break bread at table, returning thanks to the Divine Giver, and offer it to his household and his guests? Did not our Lord himself at the Last Supper take the bread and wine, having offered thanks, and give them to his disciples?¹ Therefore both the breaking of the bread and the offering of the thanksgiving (which was so prominent a function as to give its most common name, the Eucharist, to the Supper) would probably belong to the president's office. And would he not be acting in the Master's own place, representing him?

But who should this president be? A prophetic teacher, no doubt, if one were present in the congregation; for the government of the churches in the early period was distinctly charismatic. But in the second century, it may be supposed, the congregation was often without a prophetic teacher. In such a case, what could be better than to elect a president to take his place?

Then, too, the man who presided on this supreme occasion of worship and communion would most naturally be intrusted with

city of Christendom a plurality of bishops could have been reduced to one single bishop "in the short space of time allowed for the revolution."

¹Mark xiv. 22, 23; Luke xxii. 19.

the church's property. For this property consisted not, as in later times, of grounds and buildings, but of regularly contributed supplies for the needy—that is to say, of the freewill offerings of food that were brought to the Lord's table. These, together with one or more books of Scripture—which, in some cases, were doubtless owned by a congregation—seem to have been the whole of the Church's "wealth" in those earliest days. There it lay—brought to the meeting-room, placed upon the Lord's table, to be distributed among the poor, whether these were officers or simply members of the church.¹

Again, the presidency at the Lord's Supper would tend to carry with it the exercise of discipline. For the most commonly inflicted penalty was exclusion from the Lord's table; and it might easily become the custom (and in due course of time the *law*) that this penalty should be both adjudged and executed by the presiding officer of the eucharistic assembly.

Now the combination of these three functions, the liturgic, the financial, and the judicial—leadership in worship, the treasure-ship of the church, the exercise of discipline—constituted the

¹"When the reader of the Scriptures has ceased," says Justin in a classic passage, "the president orally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgiving according to his ability, and the people assent by saying Amen. And there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well-to-do and willing give what each thinks fit, and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows and those in sickness or want, the prisoners and strangers among us."

Somewhat later, references are made to contributions in money as well as in kind: "We have our treasure-chest. . . . On the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are, as it were, piety's deposit fund." (Tertullian, *Apol.* XXXIX.)

"If thou art not able to cast anything considerable into the Corban [offering], yet at least bestow upon the strangers one, or two, or five mites." (Const. Apost. II. v. 36.)

This development may be regarded as inevitable. Compare the Jews' offerings at the altar and at the treasury of the Temple.

highest office in the congregation. Shall it be filled by several office-bearers in rotation? Rather let one of them, the most highly gifted and trustworthy, be regularly charged with this responsibility. Let the office be made permanent. At all events, it seems to have become so, as a matter of fact, in the middle of the second century.

Now, then, what was the situation, as thus conceived? In the first place, there was needed a presiding officer of the presbyters, "to remedy schism" (as Jerome says), and to secure a more efficient executive. In the second place, there was needed a presiding officer of the congregation in time of worship, to take charge of the administration of the Lord's Supper and of the people's offerings (as Justin Martyr shows). But these two little presidencies were similar in their requirements, and might be filled by the same man. Accordingly the same man was appointed to both, either by the presbyters or by presbyters and people conjointly; and thus he became the single pastoral overseer of the congregation. So the two needs, we may imagine, called unitedly for the one congregational bishop.

Shall we listen to still another attempted solution of the question—namely, that the original Apostles ordained the first bishops, conferring upon them the exclusive power of ordaining others, and thus constituting a line of ordinations for all bishops throughout the subsequent ages?

This is the theory of "apostolic succession," which will form the subject of the next two chapters.

XI.

UNITY: APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

THE phrase "apostolic succession" is used in two principal senses. It may mean that from the days of the Apostles there has been a threefold ministry in the Church—deacons, presbyters, and bishops; that the bishops occupy the office of general oversight to which the original Apostles were appointed by the Lord; that they have been ordained to their office in a line of descent reaching back to the Apostles themselves, with authority to ordain their successors even unto the end of time; and that this therefore is the only regular and orderly mode of church government, and ought to be universally followed.

The advocate of this theory will not necessarily assert that there have been no breaks in the line of episcopal ordinations. He may regard it as in the highest degree probable that such irregularities have occurred. But this does not invalidate the claim of the apostolic succession, as he understands it. Because this succession is essentially not tactual but corporate, not personal but institutional. That is to say, if he can show that it has been uniformly maintained in any church from the beginning, despite temporary irregularities, actual or possible, in the matter of ordination to the episcopate, such a church is truly regular, catholic, apostolic.¹

But a like claim must not be made for any other church. The lack of this kind of episcopate leaves other religious bodies sim-

¹"They declare that 'it is evident to all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.' While they do not assert that this arrangement is the result of a categorical command of Christ, still they hold it to be of so potent obligation that it may not be changed except for weightier reasons than have as yet been offered." (McConnell, "History of the American Episcopal Church," pp. 174, 175.)

ply "religious bodies," or at best "societies of Christians." Only through a distressing misnomer can they be called churches. Hence their ministers are not invited to preach or to take any part in the conduct of worship and the administration of sacraments in an episcopal church. This theory, laying supreme emphasis upon the antiquity and continuity of the bishop's office, and not upon his personal derivation of authority through an absolutely unbroken tactual line of descent from the Apostles, is preferably known by the newer and less definite name of the "historic episcopate."¹

The other theory is purely personal, derivative, and sacerdotal. The Twelve Apostles possessed within themselves all ministerial powers and offices, as a bestowment direct from Christ; and by detaching these in different measures, as rays of light from the sun or streams from a fountain, they created three classes of officers in the Church—namely, deacons, priests, and bishops; to the bishops only they gave the power of ordination; bishops of the present day have come down in an unbroken line from the Apostles, and through them from Christ himself; they are thereby invested with supreme governing power and with exclusive ordaining power in the Church; and the highest significance of their successional standing is, that it constitutes them a channel of actual divine grace received through the original Apostles and their successors, and by these Apostles immediately from Christ. Accordingly by the laying on of hands in confirmation they can impart "that gift of the Holy Ghost which is the essence of the

¹"The bishops at Chicago and at Lambeth spoke of the 'historic episcopate.' That phrase has room enough for all varieties of opinion. It is the assertion of a fact. There is such a form of ecclesiastical government, which exists to-day and has existed from the beginning of the Christian Church; as the historic episcopate. There is an institutional theory about it, which they may hold who will. There is also a successional theory about it, which they may hold who will. Each of these theories can quote texts out of the Bible and out of the Prayer Book. But neither the doctrine of apostolic evolution nor the doctrine of apostolic succession is set forth by authority. The Church, instead of asserting that our way is either the best way or the only way, is content to affirm the simple fact, easily tested by history, that ours is the old way." (Hodges, "The Episcopal Church," p. 35.)

Christian life." Also, by the laying on of hands in ordination, they can impart that gift of the Holy Ghost, that "*grace of Holy Orders*," which makes men not simply ministers but priests, empowered to offer up the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice, and in their turn to impart grace to those who receive this sacrament at their hands. In a word, the Christian ministry is, in the literal sense of the word, a *priesthood*, and there is a divinely ordained order of bishop-priests by whom only it can be perpetuated and governed.

Without this form of the episcopate, then, there can be no valid Christian ministry nor Lord's Supper, no covenanted grace, no Church. Imagine all the bishop-priests to die—say, by the hand of violence, in time of persecution—and though all the rest of the officers and all the laity should survive and be perpetuated through the coming years, the Church of Christ would be extinct on earth. There would only remain "bodies of Christians," with no valid ministry or sacrament of the Lord's Supper or covenanted grace, and capable therefore of doing only such service for the coming of the kingdom of God as—mere bodies of Christians are doing to-day!

This is the theory of apostolic succession that is held by the Ritualists of the Church of England and of the Protestant Episcopal Church.¹ It includes the whole claim of the historic epis-

¹"The Apostles, thus invested with the plenitude of ministerial power, detached from themselves in the form of distinct grades or orders of ministry, so much as was needed, at successive epochs, for building up and supporting the Church." (Liddon, "Clerical Life and Work," p. 293.)

"That the special priestly powers descend by due imposition of hands from the Apostles, and may not be invaded without sacrilege, we hold as one of the chief pillars of the constitution of the Church of Christ." (Moberly, "The Administration of the Holy Spirit," pp. 201, 202.)

"Under the Christian dispensation the succession to the ministry is . . . a succession communicated from Christ through the Apostles by the gift of the Holy Ghost, in connection with an external individual call given by those who have themselves received it." (Seabury, "Introduction to the Study of Ecclesiastical Polity," p. 87.)

"What man receives in Christ is the very life of God. Here, again, each Christian receives the gift as an endowment of his own personal life. . . . But the individual life can receive this fellowship with God only through

copate, and much more. Therefore it alone will call for consideration in our present inquiry.

1. ITS HISTORY IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Let us bear in mind that apostolic succession, as thus defined, has never been so strongly emphasized by any church as by the school of the English and the American Ritualists. The Orthodox Eastern Church claims this succession, but not so much on the ground of external derivation from the Apostles as on that of a continuity of apostolic teaching. This Church takes orthodoxy as evidence of the true succession rather than the true succession as evidence of orthodoxy. And its theologians teach that, in the case of heresy or schism, the "grace of holy orders" tends to decline, and may be wholly lost.¹ The Roman Church claims this succession distinctly, unequivocally. But it includes the bishop in the order of priesthood, than which it acknowledges no higher "holy order." Moreover, it rests the commission of both bishops and priests upon the immediate authority of the Church—that is to say, of the pope—rather than upon their tactual apostolic descent. The Church of England claims the "succession" in the ecclesiastic, or institutional, but not in the personal and sacerdotal, sense. The personal and sacerdotal dogma does, it is true, prevail to a large extent in this Church; but not in her Articles nor Ordinal nor Homilies is it taught. Nor do either the Low Churchmen or the Broad Churchmen believe it.

The fact is that this High-Church, or sacerdotal, theory of apostolic succession does not seem to have been originally advocated in the English Church. Very early, indeed, there were two schools or parties in the Church—the Anglicans, who were favorable to the episcopal office, and the Puritans, who would

membership in the one body and by dependence upon social sacraments of regeneration, of confirmation, of communion, of absolution—of which ordained ministers are the appointed instruments." (Gore, "Church and Ministry," pp. 84, 85.)

¹Fortescue, "The Orthodox Eastern Church," p. 261.

have discarded it. The reign of Elizabeth was a period of controversy between these two parties. And in this long contention the Puritan position—as represented, for example, by its chief champion, Thomas Cartwright—was that of the divine right of presbytery. This form of government and no other—so Cartwright held—was scriptural and obligatory. The Anglican position, on the contrary—as represented by Cartwright's chief opponent, Archbishop Whitgift—was that of ecclesiastic freedom. The Scriptures—so Whitgift held—make no particular form of government obligatory upon the Church; and as to episcopacy, it is a primitive polity, agreeable to the Scriptures, already established in the realm of England, and therefore not to be abandoned. But that this episcopal polity is a universally obligatory institute of Christ, or that it is necessary to the very existence of the Church, was not maintained—only that it is scriptural and expedient.

In entire harmony with this view are the Articles of Religion in whatever they declare concerning the Church, its ministers, its ordinances, or any other subject. Take, for example, the definition of the Church as given in Article XIX.: "The.[appropriately, *a*]¹ Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."² Prob-

¹It has been conjectured that this inaccuracy arose from the inattentive use of the definite instead of the indefinite article in translating from the Latin—in which language the Articles of Religion are supposed to have been written—the words *Ecclesia Christi visibilis*. But the perpetuation of so obvious an error is rather surprising.

²Burnet, in his exposition of the twenty-third Article of Religion, says that if in a case of real necessity a company of Christians should frame a "regulated constitution," appointing ministers and forming a church of their own, "this is not condemned or annulled by this Article, . . . whatever some hotter spirits have thought." "We are very sure," he continues, "that not only those who penned the Articles, but the body of this Church for about half an age after did, notwithstanding these irregularities, acknowledge the foreign churches so constituted to be true churches in all the essentials of a church, though they had been irregularly formed and continued still to be in an imperfect state." ("Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles.")

ably no bishop of the time held any other view of the Church and its government.¹ Accordingly during this period the Reformed Churches of the Continent were admitted into fraternal relations with the English Church, and their ministerial orders recognized as valid.² Ministers who had been ordained presbyters in these churches, as also in the Church of Scotland, were received into the English Church and appointed without reordination to various charges.³

¹Hooker was a strenuous upholder of the apostolic origin of the episcopacy. Nevertheless he held it to be subject, like any other matter of government, to the judgment of the Church, which, for good and sufficient reasons, might change or discontinue it. For example, in his exposition of Jerome's famous assertion of the origin of the episcopacy by elevation from the presbyterate, he says: "Forasmuch as the whole body of the Church *hath power to alter*, with general consent and upon necessary occasions, *even the positive laws of the Apostles*, if there be no command to the contrary; and it manifestly appears to her that change of times hath taken away the very reasons of God's first institution, as by sundry examples may be most clearly proved; what laws the universal Church might change and doth not, if they have long continued without any alteration, it seemeth that St. Jerome ascribeth continuance of such positive laws, though instituted by God himself, to the judgment of the Church." ("Ecc. Polity," Bk. VII., sec. 5. See also sec. 14.)

²"The idea of the exclusive validity of episcopal orders was not generally entertained at that time by the great majority of Churchmen even in England." (McConnell, "Hist. of the American Episcopal Church," p. 41.)

The fact is not denied by High-Church writers, however greatly its significance may fail of their appreciation: "One may recognize that as a fact the Anglican divines of the seventeenth century admitted exceptions to the necessity of episcopal ordination without either thinking their teaching on this head seriously dangerous, or on the other hand regarding it as quite adequate to ancient standards." (Gore, "The Mission of the Church," p. 116.)

³"Such were Whittingham, Dean of Durham, and Cartwright, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. It is doubtful whether any prelate of the English Church in Elizabeth's reign held the *jure divino* theory of Episcopacy." (D. S. Schaff, in the *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, Art. "Episcopacy.") The usual statement has been that Bancroft, soon to be made a bishop, did in his famous sermon at St. Paul's Cross, toward the close of Elizabeth's reign, advocate the *jure divino* theory of the episcopacy. But even this fact does not seem to have been placed beyond doubt. Henry Hallam could find no such claim set forth in the sermon: "The divine right of episcopacy is said to have been laid down by Bancroft in his sermon at St. Paul's Cross in

The further story, which cannot here be followed, is still the story of an open question, with its ever-increasing literature—the High Churchmen upholding the episcopacy as necessary to the very existence of the Church, the Low Churchmen and Broad Churchmen regarding it as necessary to the Church's well-being only. It is true that the methods of historic inquiry have improved, and the materials of this particular inquiry have increased in the last three hundred years; so that Hatch and Gore, for example, enjoy some advantages over Cartwright and Whitgift. And this has proved altogether favorable to the Low-Church view.¹

But externalism, romanticism, æstheticism, the sense of mystic symbolism, the love of power, the desire somehow to make real to oneself the good effects of one's ministrations, all these are more attracted by the other view; and these are no mean antagonists of either scholarship or common sense. A Sir Walter Scott would win many a mind to whom an Archbishop Whately could only appeal in vain. Moonlight has a charm of its own—however inferior to walk or work by. Is it the well-reasoned conclusions of the logical intellect to which men are most passionately devoted? It is often some creation of the idealizing faculty, or some fascinating visible fact, or some overmastering claim. And very easily may such intruders as these learn to sidetrack a human judgment.

1558. But I do not find anything in it to that effect." ("The Constitutional History of England," Vol. I., ch. vii., p. 387, n.)

The same author adds the note that "Laud had been reprov'd by the University of Oxford in 1604 for maintaining, in his exercise for bachelor of divinity, that there could be no true church without bishops, which was thought to cast a bone of contention between the Church of England and the Reformed upon the Continent."

Compare the statement of Green the English historian: "For the first time [by the Act of Uniformity, 1662] since the Reformation all orders save those conferred by the hands of bishops were legally disallowed." ("History of the English People," Vol. III., p. 361.)

¹The preponderance of scholarly judgment in the Church of England is decidedly contrary to the High-Church claim—witness such names as Lightfoot, Westcott, Hatch, Hort. "On the question of organization I imagine we agree more than we differ; but some of your language is not such as I

Especially notable is the creative power of antiquity, the magic of many-centuried custom, in loyal and idealizing minds—through which it is no uncommon thing for a pagan people to dream their line of kings descended from the gods.

The “visible fact”—such, for instance, as an institution, a custom, a succession of honored officers—let it be freely granted, may enshrine some great truth against which the “reasoned conclusions of the logical intellect” will have nothing to offer. It will thus be serving a most useful purpose. By all means let us have it. Let the truths of religion be presented to the world in the concrete—in institutions, offices, object lessons, figures of speech, various symbols, and, above all, in personal Christian lives. Was not this a method of the Teacher who knew, as no one else, “what was in man” and how to reach that inner self? In the same way will his teaching Church uniformly bear its messages to men. Only let it make sure always that the message is indeed from him—that truth, not fiction, finds embodiment in the symbolic form or fact. For fiction no less than truth, idolatry no less than Christianity, teaches through symbols.

2. THE SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT PRO AND CON.

The argument for apostolic succession is ecclesiastic rather than scriptural. It is on no better than strained relations with any portion of Scripture—at home with none. Nevertheless, it cannot be excused from appearing face to face with the witness of the New Testament. Indeed, the inquiry might here not improperly both begin and end; for the tremendous claim of High Anglicanism can be acknowledged on no lower authoritative testimony than that of some well-authenticated teaching of Jesus or his Apostles.¹

would naturally use. I quite go with you in condemning the refusal of fellowship with sister churches merely because they make no use of some elements of organization assumed to be *jure divino* essential.” (Letter from Dr. Hort to Dr. Hatch, quoted in Fairbairn, “Catholicism,” p. 417.)

¹“Thus Estius, no mean schoolman, handling this very question of the difference of bishops and presbyters, very fairly quits the Scriptures, and betakes himself to other weapons. ‘But that bishops by a Divine right are

Its Scripture argument, briefly stated, is the following: (1) Christ chose out of the whole number of disciples twelve Apostles, to whom, it is assumed, he gave supreme governmental powers; (2) in the parable of the household he asks, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"¹ showing that there are to be officers as well as ordinary members in the Church; (3) he promised to Simon Peter "the keys of the kingdom of heaven,"² and this means that Peter is to have authority, which is also conferred upon the other Apostles,³ to give legislative decisions in the Church; (4) in the last days of his ministry and after the Resurrection, he still dealt with the Apostles as representative disciples,⁴ and the commission then given them would seem to have been given to an abiding apostolate destined to be permanent unto the end of the world; (5) he bade Simon Peter tend (*ποιμαίνε*) his flock, which includes both teaching and governing;⁵ (6) he conferred the apostolic office upon Paul, which implies a plenary authority to teach and to govern—as shown, for instance, in his relation to the Corinthian Church; (7) this Apostle had power to deliver an offender to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,⁶ and (8) to appoint Timothy and Titus apostolic delegates;⁷ (9) James was presiding officer, or bishop, of the church in Jerusalem;⁸ (10) the Apostles ordained "the Seven,"⁹ and Paul and Barnabas ordained presbyters in Asia Minor;¹⁰ (11) Apostles laid their hands upon certain baptized persons to impart to them the gift of the Holy

superior to presbyters although not so clear from the Scriptures, nevertheless can, from other writings, be sufficiently proved.' Ingenuously said, however; but all the difficulty is, how a *jus divinum* should be proved when men leave the Scriptures. . . . We follow therefore the scent of the game into this wood of antiquity, wherein it will be easier to lose ourselves than to find that which we are upon the pursuit of, a *jus divinum* of any particular form of government." (Stillingfleet, "Irenicum," Part II., c. 6, sec. 16.)

¹Luke xii. 41-43.

²Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

³John xx. 22, 23.

⁴Matt. xxvi. 26-30; xxviii. 16-20.

⁵John xxi. 16.

⁶1 Cor. v. 3-5.

⁷1 Tim. i. 3; Titus i. 5.

⁸Acts xv.

⁹Acts vi.

¹⁰Acts xiv. 23.

Spirit, which is the grace by which the Christian life is lived;¹ (12) the Apostles and presbyters in council decided the question sent from Antioch concerning the reception of Gentile converts;² (13) Paul had power to impart a definite ministerial gift through the imposition of hands—as he did to Timothy.³

What is here pleaded for, it would be well to remember, is the sacerdotal idea raised to its highest power. The proposition is that the Apostles were priests, empowered by Christ to impart to men in the sacraments “the grace by which Christians live;” and that, being thus constituted priest-lords, they were also invested by Christ with supreme authority to govern the Church, and were commanded to transmit this authority through ordination to the bishops, who were to be their successors throughout all subsequent generations; and that the bishops, likewise, and all those whom they should ordain to the priesthood, should have the power to impart saving grace to men in the sacraments; that, accordingly, when presbyters undertake to ordain to the ministry of Christ they are guilty of sacrilege, and those whom they ordain are not ministers of Christ but only ministerial pretenders acting in violation of his will and word.

Do the proofs support this amazing proposition? Under the slightest scrutiny their insufficiency is manifest: (1) The Apostles were sent forth as Christ’s chief witnessing preachers, to disciple all nations, and not as the supreme rulers of the Church and the ordainers of others to such supreme rulership; (2) unquestionably there are to be officers as well as ordinary members in the Church; (3) the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” were given to the Apostles, but without any hint of their official transmission to others, and, moreover, they are also given to the Christian congregation;⁴ (4) the Apostles’ commission and the promised presence of Christ unto the end of the world offer no evi-

¹Acts viii. 14-18; xix. 1-7.

²Acts xv.

³2 Tim. i. 6, 7.

I have here followed, with only a slight change of order, the Scripture argument for the sacerdotal succession in Gore’s “The Church and the Ministry”—the most complete that I know.

⁴Matt. xviii. 16-20.

dence for the perpetuation, tactually or otherwise, of either their particular office or their jurisdiction; (5) to shepherd the flock of Christ, teaching and governing, is every pastor's duty; (6) Paul exerted no authority in the Corinthian Church, or in any other, except such as would be reasonably and freely accorded him in his evangelic office, as an Apostle of Jesus, "not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles," and a founder, chief pastor, and inspired teacher of Christian churches—or such as would be accorded any great-minded missionary evangelist and pastor in our own age; (7) there is not even a suggestion that the Apostle's power of authoritative judgment, delivering the scandalous Corinthian church-member to physical suffering for the sake of restoration to spiritual health, was a transmissible power, nor is it as a matter of fact an episcopal power in the present day; (8) the appointment of apostolic delegates for a temporary purpose makes no approach to the transmission of sacerdotal and legislative functions to an age-long line of successors; (9) the presidency of James in the Church at Jerusalem was such as any Christian congregation might believe in and enjoy; (10) that Apostles ordained presbyters and deacons to their office proves nothing for an apostolic sacerdotal succession; (11) the gifts of the Holy Spirit given through the laying on of Apostles' hands were miraculous gifts, attested by outward signs, such as the speaking with tongues, and not the grace of God by which the Christian life is lived; (12) Timothy's ministerial gift was given him "through prophecy" as well as "through the laying on of" the Apostles' hands: the preposition is the same (*διὰ*) in both cases.

But it may be well to examine this argument from Timothy's ordination a little more closely. As to what was the particular ministry to which he was set apart, we are not informed. It may have been that of a presbyter in Lystra;¹ or, as seems more probable, that of a traveling evangelist. Just as certain prophets and teachers of the church in Antioch had recently laid their hands upon Paul and Barnabas and sent them forth as missionaries, so may Paul and the presbyters have sent Timothy forth.

¹Acts xiv. 23; xvi. 1-5.

It is not the particular ministry, however, but the ministerial gift with which we are here concerned. We notice, then, that the relation of prophecy to this ministerial gift could only have been that of recognition or testimony—the prophet declaring the gift (χάρισμα) of the Holy Spirit which was in this well-instructed young Christian. The same, it may be believed, was the relation of the imposition of the Apostle's (and the presbytery's) hands to this gift—namely, not that of a cause or a medium, but that of a recognition and testimony. The Apostle and presbyters thereby declared that qualification for the ministry which had already been given to Timothy as an immediate gift from God—just as the imposition of the Apostles' hands upon “the Seven,” who were already “full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom,” was not causative but declarative of their fitness for the ministry of tables for which they had been selected.¹

Or, if it be supposed that by Timothy's ministerial gift is meant a special illumination of the Spirit which had been received at the time of the laying on of hands, still here is no sacerdotal or official impartation of God's Spirit. Let us pray that the same anointing from the Holy One for spiritual vision and the opening of blinded eyes, may be received at our own or any other ordination to Christ's holy ministry. For “who is sufficient for these things?” That flame of Christly love caught from the altar of God, that inner baptism from the ascended Christ for sacrifice and service, may be realized in the selfsame hour of one's setting apart to the ministry of redeeming grace. And it may abide even unto the end.

At the very time of receiving baptism or the Lord's Supper, to instance some similar experiences, one may receive through the spirit of faith (not *ex opere operato*) an inward conscious revelation of the love of God in Christ.² And why may there

¹Acts vi. 6.

²“On the day following, the Conference [the first Methodist Conference, 1744] was opened, with solemn prayer, a sermon by Charles Wesley, and the baptism of an adult, who then and there found peace with God.” (Tyerman, “Life of Wesley,” Vol. I., p. 443.)

“Then I began to pray again and read the Scriptures; and one Sunday

not be the same experience at the time of ordination to the Christian ministry? It may be and has been, again and again. "When the bishop laid his hands upon my head, if my vile heart doth not deceive me, I offered up my whole spirit, soul, and body to the service of God's sanctuary. . . . I can call heaven and earth to witness. . . . I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me;" such was the testimony of George Whitefield.¹ And was not this realization of entire self-committal to the service of God in the preaching of the gospel a ministerial gift? Was it not a spirit of power and love which he might well "stir up" from time to time, and of which his whole after-life proved the reality?

Or, once again, supposing for the argument's sake that there came upon Timothy, through the laying on of hands, some charism of the Holy Spirit—as in the case of the Samaritan² and the Ephesian converts³—will it be maintained that therefore a like gift of the Spirit is imparted to candidates for the ministry by bishops of to-day? We know that it is not. The signs are nowhere in evidence.

3. TESTIMONY OF THE SUB-APOSTOLIC AGE—IGNATIUS.

The testimony of the sub-apostolic age on this subject confirms that of the New Testament. The bishops, appearing nowhere as officially superior to the presbyters till the time of Ignatius, were not spoken of by him as successors of the Apostles. They were represented as standing in the place of Christ or of God the Father, and the presbyters in the place of the Apostles⁴

I called at Whitehall Chapel, where the sacrament was going to be delivered. I went to the table with trembling limbs and a heavy heart; but no sooner had I received than I found power to believe that Jesus Christ had shed his blood for me, and that God for his sake had forgiven my offenses. Then was my heart filled with love to God and man; and since then sin hath not had dominion over me." (The personal testimony of a converted soldier, in John Nelson's Journal, p. 17.)

¹Southey, "Life of Wesley," Vol. I., 145.

²Acts viii. 14-19.

³Acts xix. 1-6.

⁴"While your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the Apostles." (To the Magnesians, 6.) "Ye

—not, however, through a tactual succession. But the fact that bishops were not represented as in a tactual succession is well-nigh conclusive proof that they were not so regarded. For if Ignatius, in his unceasing insistence upon the authority of the bishop, could have declared to the Ephesians or the Magnesians or the Trallians or any others, that this church officer received his office by direct transmission from Christ through the Apostles and their successors, it is, to say the least, in the extremest degree unlikely that he should have failed to avail himself of such a plea. What counter consideration could have laid upon his pen the spell of so strange a reticence?¹

Neither is there a word in this age concerning the tactual transmission of grace.

We have found Irenæus, toward the close of the second century, expressing his belief in a doctrinal succession. He refers to the church at Rome as the most notable example of it. The Gnostics, against whom he is arguing, professed to be teaching doctrines of the Apostles which they had received through traditions and apostolic writings in their possession. Irenæus denies their claim, and challenges them to put forward the proof. Then he goes on to show where, in his judgment, the true tradition of apostolic doctrine may be found—namely, in churches founded by Apostles, and preserving through a succession of

are subject to the bishops as to Jesus Christ; . . . should also be subject to the presbyters as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ." (To the Trallians, 2.) "Let all reverence the bishop as Jesus Christ, . . . and the presbyters as the sanhedrin of God, and assembly of the Apostles." (*Ibid.*, 3.)

And of himself this bishop of Antioch says: "I do not command you as if I were Peter or Paul: they were Apostles." (To the Romans, 4.) Or again: "Shall I . . . reach such a height of self-esteem that . . . I should issue commands to you as if I were an Apostle?" (To the Trallians, 3.)

¹Bishop Thomas F. Gailor has said that "Ignatius is so intent on the authority of the bishops that he does not stop their succession with the Apostles, but traces it back to Christ himself." (In "Church Reunion," p. 249, n.) I do not find a word of Ignatius that even suggests a tracing of a succession of bishops back either to the Apostles or to Christ. The idea of an episcopal succession is simply foreign to his Letters.

bishops (whom he also calls presbyters) that original depositum of truth. Here in the church at Rome, and in other apostolic churches, was a line of chief pastors which Irenæus believed to reach back to the apostolic age. This he regarded as the Christian guarantee of pure doctrine.¹ But of a tactual or sacerdotal line of chief officers and teachers Irenæus knew nothing.

It may be worthy of a parenthetical remark, that the Roman or the Orthodox Eastern or the English Church cannot consistently entertain the Irenæan idea of the true succession of doctrine; because each of these three churches acknowledges a regular succession of bishops in either one or both of the others, and at the same time charges them both with heresy.

Passing on, then, from Ignatius and Irenæus, we continue to ask, At what time and under what circumstances was the High-Church bishop's claim as to his origin first put forth? Not from the beginning. All the available evidence tends to show that it was not for perhaps three generations after the episcopal office began, here and there, to be instituted. The claim was not used to help create the office, but to help justify and perpetuate its existence as an already familiar and universal institution.

A similar historic example may be shown in the gigantic fiction of the divine right of kings. Did a certain man stand up among his unorganized fellows, in some "wondrous mother-age" of the rude and shadowy olden time, and undertake to prove to them that he was chosen by the gods whom they feared to be their king? We cannot think so. On the contrary, some strong man stood up, under favoring circumstances, and was accepted by the clan or tribe as their chief—among our barbarous Teutonic ancestors, for example. Then by his endowments of body and mind, with his policy and his sword, in coöperation with the people, he strengthened his position—made himself indeed a king. And then, long after the throne had been established, the reigning king, perhaps not a strong man at all—say, a James the

¹"This was the primary significance of the episcopal successions, which were first valued as the guarantee of doctrinal truth." (Dean Armitage Robinson, "The Vision of Unity," p. 23.)

First or some earlier English king—claimed a direct divine origin for the authority with which he found himself invested. He and his predecessors alike, so it was announced from the seat of power, were born to rule; and any resistance of their monarchical will, for any cause whatever, must be punished as a crime.

What bishop, then, first made the claim of divine right for his office? Perhaps Hippolytus, bishop and martyr, as he is supposed to have been, a resident of Rome or its vicinity, in the early part of the third century. "But none," says Hippolytus, "will refuse these [certain heathen errors] save the Holy Spirit bequeathed unto the Church, which the Apostles, having in the first instance received, have transmitted to those who have rightly believed. But we as being their successors, and as participators in this grace, high-priesthood, and office of teaching, as well as being reputed guardians of the Church, must not be found deficient in diligence, or disposed to suppress sound doctrine."¹

Not a perfectly clear statement, this passage may nevertheless be taken as containing substantially the basal idea for which the modern High Churchman makes his plea.

But the most prominent and influential ecclesiastic of the third century who stood for the successional sacerdotal idea was another bishop and martyr, whose acquaintance we have already made, Cyprian of Carthage.²

4. HOW SHALL THE SILENCE OF HISTORY BE ACCOUNTED FOR?

Here, then, is a question. If the single bishop is not heard of till the time of Ignatius, how will the High Churchman account for the existence of the sacerdotal line up to that time? He offers to account for it on any one of three suppositions.

The first is that, during this early period every member of the board of presbyters, or bishops (presbyter-bishops), was in this sacerdotal episcopal succession—that is to say, was empowered, through his ordination, to ordain others. But when one of the number rose to supremacy over the rest, thus becoming the sole

¹"Refutation of All Heresies," *Proemium*.

²See pp. 345, 346.

and single bishop of the congregation, he alone continued to exercise the ordaining function; and accordingly the line of episcopal ordinations descended thenceforth from him. The function of ordination at the beginning was, so to speak, "put in commission," and there remained till the emergence of the single bishop.¹

The second supposition is that some one member of the board of presbyters had authority to ordain, and yet was called by the same name as his colleagues. It has been said of this explanation that it "cannot be disproved"²—which is probably true.

The third, and perhaps more generally preferred supposition, is that the bishops ordained by the Apostles were, like the Apostles themselves, itinerants, and that either they or their successors settled down, one after another, as single pastors, or bishops, and ordained their successors as such. Of these itinerant bishops, Timothy and Titus in the New Testament and a class of itinerant preachers called in the Didache "apostles" (in the wider sense of the title), "prophets," "teachers," are cited as examples.³

Now there is none of these suppositions, of course, that claims the support of proof. In fact, none of them bears any mark of likelihood. They have simply been invented to show how a line of episcopal ordinations of which there is no contemporaneous evidence might conceivably have been started and kept up.

¹"But there are certain facts that have led some good authorities to suppose that, at one time, all the presbyters in some churches held together the chief authority in government and the power to ordain, the 'episcopate' being, as it were, 'in commission' among them. . . . It [this theory] does not affect the principle of apostolic succession in the least. . . . It no more disturbs the principle of apostolic succession than if your lordship ordained all the presbyters in this diocese to-day to episcopal functions." (Gore, "The Mission of the Church," pp. 22, 23.)

²"While, however, this view cannot be disproved, it must be admitted that it is unsupported by the evidence of the documents we have been considering." (Gore, "The Church and the Ministry," p. 304.)

³The Didache, xl. 3; xiii. 2. Gore, "The Church and the Ministry," pp. 304, 305. This author depreciates the testimony of the Didache, as a whole, but magnifies it here. It proves nothing, however, except that there were itinerant preachers in that day.

5. THE SUCCESSIONAL SACERDOTAL EPISCOPATE A ROMAN IDEA.

There is still another question of origins that here invites attention: Whence came the idea of the successional prelatic episcopacy? We fail to find it arising out of historic facts; it shows no kinship to Greek ideals; it is foreign to Scripture teaching. But it does bear the water-marks of the governmental genius of Rome, with the Roman faculty of centralization and iron imperialism. As the emperors laid hold upon and concentrated in themselves the powers which under the Republic had been exercised by senate, consul, tribune, chief priest, every governmental officer, and asserted, "All these are rightly ours, for the unity and permanence of the empire, and have been ours, through inheritance, from the beginning of the imperial line," so the bishops laid hold upon the powers which had been formerly exercised by people and presbyters—the power to teach, to administer sacraments, to absolve, to rule—and declared, "All these are ours, for the unity and permanence of the Church, through the line of episcopal ordinations, even from the Divine Christ himself."

In neither case was truth conspicuous. In point of fact, Rome as military conqueror and civil ruler did not ask so much, What is true? as, What is effective? She enacted such laws, established such institutions, followed such methods, claimed such authority as seemed best suited to her stupendous purpose. To justify these actions at the bar of exact justice and truth, if seriously attempted at all, was an after-consideration. So likewise with the ecclesiasticism of the third and the following centuries, as affected by the Roman spirit. It instituted such ritual observances, adopted such forms of government, put forth such claims as seemed well suited to strengthen its authority or extend its influence, and sought justification for them in some word of Scripture. Power was held dearer than truth. Might was more faithfully practiced than right.

But the Roman emperor was one, while the monarchical bishops were many. They were a widespread brotherhood of little monarchs, none superior to any other. This meant that the development was as yet incomplete. The logical outcome must be

a single bishop, lord of all the others, ruling alone, if he can, over the whole ecclesiastic empire. Thus, accordingly, with steady and inevitable steps, it came to pass. And whom should all signs betoken as this one imperial and absolute ruler—whom but the bishop of the City of the Cæsars?

So the Church took on the Roman imperial character. Did it convert the Empire? It did so, but at the same time was itself, to a large extent, converted by the Empire. The Medieval Church, with its pope, its bishops under authority and having men under them, its army of priests and monks, and its policy of maintaining unity by unrelenting compulsion, was the new and ecclesiastic form of the Rome of the Emperors. “That which Marius and Cæsar”—so the flatterers of Hildebrand are reported to have said to him—“could not effect with torrents of blood you are effecting with a word.”

XII.

'APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION: THE UNREAL 'AND THE REAL.

THE sacerdotal theory of apostolic succession needs to be supported by the most indubitable evidence. For its demands upon the reason and the spirit are indeed hard to bear. Those who hold it must believe that an absolutely unbroken physical channel of grace extends through all the intervening ages from the Apostles of our Lord to the bishops of to-day. A *physical channel of grace*—that is the doctrine. And if the stream be interrupted anywhere by the failure of the right person's hands to rest upon the right person's head, the Church in that line will cease to exist.

Observe, then, that in order to perpetuate the Church with its channel of sacramental grace, in any particular line, the bishop who ordains another to the episcopate must himself have been ordained in due and proper form. But not only so; he must also have been baptized, either as an infant or as an adult, in due and proper form.¹ Because an unbaptized man's imposition of hands in ordination would, according to the theory, be null and void.

We must assume, therefore, that both these requirements, baptism and ordination, were complied with in the case of every bishop who stands anywhere in any line of episcopal ordinations that has reached unto our own day. Through all the generations of nearly twenty centuries there has not occurred a single

¹Not that the bishop in question must needs have been baptized by a priest. Baptism by laymen is regarded as valid—a regenerative rite, just as if a priest had performed it—both by the Roman Catholic Church and the Ritualists. "They [the "sects"]," says the Protestant Episcopal Bishop Grafton in a recent utterance, "have lost sacramental grace, save that of baptism." But why not that also?

failure in either of the two. And such generations as many of them were! Among ignorant and barbarous populations, in semi-paganized Christianity, in times when the bishop's office was shamelessly bought and sold like any article of merchandise in the market, during the Dark Ages, during the tenth century, during the century and a half when Rome was the veriest sink of corruption, it never came to pass that one of these unnumbered bishops got into office who, through negligence, oversight, or other cause, had not been both regularly baptized and regularly ordained. All this must be believed. Otherwise it has to be admitted that the sacerdotal succession may have been broken; and hence that no bishop on earth can tell whether he be a true bishop or a sacrilegious invader of the Lord's house; no Christian minister, whether he be a true minister or an offerer of strange fire on God's altar; no church, whether it be a true church or a mere religious organization without the covenanted grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the case of such a succession calls in vain for evidence. The oft-quoted saying of Archbishop Whately, that "there is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with any approach to certainty, his spiritual pedigree,"¹ is too obviously true for discussion. Indeed, proof is here clearly out of the question. An *a priori* assumption is made to take its place. Dogma must serve for history.

I. TRANSMISSION THROUGH IMPURE HANDS.

Even if a sacerdotal line of episcopal ordinations—to take up an impossible conception—were shown beyond all controversy, what can be known of the Christian spirit and character of the

¹With similar plainness of speech and no less correctness of inference, Whately goes on to say: "The ultimate consequence must be, that any one who sincerely believes that his claim to the blessings of the gospel covenant depends on his own minister's claim to the supposed sacramental virtue of true ordination, and this again, on perfect apostolic succession as above described, must be involved, in proportion as he reads and inquires and reflects and reasons on the subject, in the most distressing doubt and perplexity." ("The Kingdom of Christ," Essay II., sec. 30.)

vast majority of the bishops through whose action the sacramental grace is supposed to be passed down from soul to soul? Were they in communion with the mind of Christ? As a matter of fact, it is known that many of these ordaining hands were idle, proud, and worldly hands.¹ It was not a Protestant controvertist but the pope Hildebrand who declared, two years after his elevation to the papal throne: "If I look with the glance of the mind toward the parts of the West, or of the South, or of the North, I find scarcely anywhere bishops who are such by lawful election and mode of life, who rule the Christian people through the love of Christ and not through worldly ambition." Undoubtedly in certain ages of the Church many of them were deep-dyed in villainy and uncleanness.

In many cases the succession of Simon the Sorcerer was distinctly recognizable. Money was offered to buy the office through which the grace of the Divine Spirit was supposed to be conveyed: "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit."² And the answer was not that of Simon Peter to Simon Magus. It was not, "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money."³ On the contrary, the silver and gold were eagerly accepted, the office conferred, and the applicant empowered, according to sacramentarian teaching, to bestow upon whomsoever he chose the Holy Spirit of God.

Through the hands, then, of such men, sitting high in the synagogue of Satan, has the grace of the Holy Spirit which alone can make a man a true minister of Jesus Christ, and perpetuate Christ's Church on earth, been communicated. And this is the way of truth, this the gospel. Such a proposition, by whatever calm and beautiful words commended, suggests a

¹"A bishop was a dignitary, a peer, a being of exalted state, as much for show as for use, but indispensable to the right constitution of things—in England. The modern idea of the Apostolic Bishop was not thinkable. Such a creature had not been seen for so many centuries that his memory had faded out." (McConnell, "Hist. of American Episcopal Church," pp. 181, 182.)

²Acts viii. 19.

³Acts viii. 20.

nearer kinship to magic and profanity than to the religion of Jesus.¹

It may be said in reply that, as everybody knows, there have been corrupt and wicked chief officers in the Church in all ages, and yet no one will assert that their depravity has broken up the Church itself. But there is an essential difference between the two cases. In the one case, these wicked and corrupt chief officers are believed to be, just like the good and true, channels of grace, absolutely necessary to the perpetuation of the Church: in the other case, they are believed to be not only unnecessary but—save as Providence may make their “wrath to praise him”—obstructive and injurious.

True it is that God’s workers in the world are all imperfect characters. Who else are anywhere to be found? There are no perfect sons of God, faultless builders of the holy city that is to be—there are none now beneath the skies. Yet, in this age-long spiritual upbuilding, God is making use of the Jacobs and Davids and Simon Peters and the men and women of to-day who love his cause. But as personalities, not as automata; for the human power that is in them, not as moving hands and lips which in and of themselves are necessary to perpetuate his Church and kingdom.

Supposing, however, that an unbroken succession of enlightened and holy men should have occupied the bishop’s chair through all these ages, the assertion that these men have actually imparted the gift of the Holy Spirit to men kneeling before them for ordination to the ministry, and have thus empowered

¹“If the grace of God comes this way, and is therefore itself much more materialistic than the best influences of human life, the Bible must be read backwards, and the most familiar and fundamental principles of Christianity will be turned upside down. Moreover, to suppose that God’s grace—so spiritually pure—not only chooses for its channel a crassly material passage along the course of the ages, but has often had to filter its way through the very sinks of uttermost depravity, according to the indisputably attested villainies of priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes, in the dark ages and the dark places of the Church’s history: is not this more than an impossibility, and worse than an absurdity? For does it not come very near to blasphemy against the Holy One?” (Lockyer, “Evangelical Succession,” pp. 127, 128).

these men in their turn to impart, through religious rites, to other souls, "the gift of the Holy Ghost which is the essence of the Christian life," would be extremely difficult of belief.

2. A VIOLATION OF ALL ANALOGIES.

For one thing this theory violates the analogy of all God's other ways of helping and saving men through their fellow-men. For how is it in all other instances that men help or save one another? It is by means of the contact of soul with soul in accordance with spiritual laws. We submit to the authority of superiors, receive knowledge from teachers, respond to the love of friends, feel and follow the example of fellow-men. The eye falls upon a printed page, and some mind of a far-off time touches our mind as really as does the friend at our side. Standing together in the congregation, Christian worshipers sing unto God and unto one another in hymns and spiritual songs; but just as truly a Bernard of Clairvaux, a Charles Wesley, a Ray Palmer is singing God's praise through them, and they through him. Out of the past, that "dying Past which never dies," but is always pulsating through the present, voices call and the touch of hands that have melted into dust is upon us.

One of the customs of the unenlightened Abyssinian Church, in ordination to the episcopal office, is to touch the head of the ordinand with the dead hand of one of his predecessors. Stripped of the superstitions that seem to be its real motive, this rite remains a symbol, however crass and repulsive, of the vital connection between the former chiefs of the Church and its present ministry.

Nor can human influence dispense with physical means and instruments. For we are still in the flesh. There is the possibility of power in a touch, in a hand-grasp, in a laying on of hands. "With the dropping of a little word," says Helen Keller, "from another's hand into mine, a slight flutter of the fingers, began the intelligence, the joy, the fullness of life."¹ When the Apostles laid hands upon the Seven, or the presbytery laid hands upon

¹"The World I Live In," pp. 5, 6.

sincere but self-distrustful young Timothy, it may be believed that the physical contact itself meant something. It was a tactual sign of authorization, of Christian confidence, of love and prayer. Such symbolic acts are not irrational or unspiritual: they make appeal to the soul by way of the senses. But to affirm that, through mere mechanical action, they communicate the presence and abiding power of the Holy Spirit, is to put them out of harmony with all other intercommunion of soul with soul. And not as elevating them above it into some sublimer sphere of their own, but as thrusting them down upon the bare physical plane.

High Anglicanism is even more materialistic at this point than Romanism. For it regards the act of the priest in baptism, in the Lord's Supper, in ordination, and in confirmation, as sufficient to impart grace, whether he intend to impart it or not, while Romanism demands the sacerdotal "intention." "If any one," declares the Council of Trent, "shall say that in ministers, while they effect and confer the sacraments, there is not required the intention at least of doing what the Church does, let him be anathema."¹ It is true that the Romanist here passes into a "very dungeon of uncertainties." For who can tell in any case whether the officiating priest has the proper intention or not? and accordingly who can tell whether any particular bishop, much less each and every whole line of bishops from the days of the Apostles onward, has received, through the hands of episcopal ordainers, the grace absolutely necessary to qualify him to ordain others and so to perpetuate the sacerdotal line?" These special uncertainties the High Anglican avoids, but only by making the priestly act still more mechanical than that of the Roman

¹Sess. VII., can. xi.

²"Again the Bishop [of Minorca] supposed another case. Suppose a bad priest without right intention baptizes a child, and the child becomes a bishop, and ordains other bishops. The consequences would be too frightful to think of. There could be no Church without a bishop, and no true bishop who was not baptized. The speaker urged the Council to declare that if the form was rightly observed, intention made no difference." (Froude, "The Council of Trent," p. 222.)

priest.¹ The Anglican officiating minister's hands and tongue, without will, suffice. Automatic action, destitute of all intelligence, desire, or purpose, may serve as the means, Divinely appointed, of conveying grace to a believing soul.²

In fact, the officiating minister may have an "evil intention," and yet, against his will, through the mere outward act performed, the grace of the Holy Spirit will be conveyed, provided always that there is a laying on of hands and the utterance of the prescribed formula. But never otherwise.³ It is a purely mechanical transmission of the grace of God to a properly recipient soul. As in the case of friend speaking to friend through the telephone, there must be a particular and fixed physical medium as well as an attentive mind to receive the message; else no communication is established. One might be excused for ask-

¹"The essential matter of ordination to the episcopate is the imposition of the bishop's hands and the Form prayer." (Blunt, *Dictionary of Historical and Doctrinal Theology*, Art. "Bishops.") To prove these essential requirements to have been met in every case is a sheer impossibility. Yet the Romanist must prove, in addition, that they have been met with a good intention on the part of the officiating bishop—a double impossibility. As to mechanicalness, however, the Roman is distinctly preferable to the Anglican conception.

²Observe, faith on the part of the recipient is an indispensable condition. "The sacramental gifts are valid through the action of the Spirit without any action on our part. They are God's gifts simply. But their whole effect on us depends on the degree of assimilative effort—the *degré* of faith—which we exercise." (Gore, "The Mission of the Church," 53.) But the same "assimilative effort," the same faith, if exercised in any other circumstances—for example, on one's knees at home, or at a table of the Lord where the bread and wine had not been consecrated by an episcopally ordained minister—would be followed by no such effect. Without the interposition of a bishop tactually descended from one of the Twelve Apostles, the Holy Spirit will not convey the "sacramental gifts."

³"If the minister of any sacrament were to perform it with the profane and perverse intention of openly ridiculing it, or making it invalid, then indeed there might be reasonable doubt whether his ministration would be effective. But if he uses the prescribed rites and words, he acts as the deputy of the Church, and no deficient or evil intention can affect the validity of what depends on his ministerial acts, and not on his private and personal will." (Blunt, "Dictionary of Historical and Doctrinal Theology," Art. "Intention.")

ing whether this is really believed or merely "accepted" or believed to be believed.

We are reminded by the Ritualist that Christianity is the religion of the Incarnation, and are told that therefore it is reasonable to expect that the grace of Christ which makes a man a genuine minister of the gospel shall flow into his soul through a material channel. But such a conclusion goes hopelessly astray from its premises. Let us listen, however, to the argument: "Tactual succession, can that convey grace?" I answer yes, if God so wills; and I am convinced that he does so will, because he rules the New Dispensation, our Christian system, by the law of the Incarnation—the law, namely, that God through the person of his Eternal Son comes to us through the *agency of matter*—and hence I would anticipate, as I find verified in the event, that all subordinate blessings, so far as I know, in his kingdom, and all other blessings are subordinate to Jesus Christ, are conveyed to me through the *instrumentality of matter*."¹ Undoubtedly so, since in this world it is impossible to live at all except "through the instrumentality of matter." But does it follow from this truth that grace is made to flow through flesh? Physical processes coöperate with spiritual processes, but do not substitute them. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," the Word was made flesh; but there is no more reason to believe that the "grace" can be imparted tactually than the "truth." It was the incarnate Saviour who said: "The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you, they are spirit and are life."

3. TESTIMONY OF CHRISTIAN AND MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCE.

Nor is the case anywise different when the testimony of Christian and ministerial experience is called for. Those who would receive the Holy Spirit must await the realization of his presence in prayer, with an open and believing heart. Those who will to do God's will are taught of him and made strong in his service. Meeting together in worship, they are helpful to one another and prepared to receive a greater spiritual gift. If at

¹The Rt. Rev. G. F. Seymour, in "Church Reunion," p. 185.

the table of the Lord they are drawn consciously nearer to him who, not having been seen, is nevertheless loved, it is through faith and trust and self-consecration no less truly than if they were kneeling in the place of secret devotion. This is surely the witness of the Christian consciousness. As to a peculiar "sacramental" grace, it is not a matter of experience but of hearsay.

And is it otherwise on the occasion of one's ordination to the ministry of the gospel, or to the office of a bishop in the Church of God? Is there in this case any such realization of divine power as one must interpret as a sign of grace given by the act of ordination itself? If the man rise up and leave the house of prayer renewed in the spirit of his vocation, is it not an experience of the same kind, however different possibly in degree, as more than once before has glorified his daily life?

4. THE PRACTICAL TEST.

But there is a practical test of religious systems; and it also is divine. Jesus has said concerning false prophets: "By their fruits ye shall know them."¹ Does he announce in this word a principle that may be applied in the present case? It would seem so. For we are not here dealing with a doctrine or a form of polity that is only one among others of perhaps equal value, and in itself indecisive as to whether the religious body representing it be really a church of Jesus Christ.² It is a question as to whether a body of religious people possess a certain "permanent and *essential* element of Christianity:" whether they have a valid ministry and valid Christian ordinances; in brief, whether they be a church of Christ or not. It is no surface question. It goes, with

¹Matt. vii. 15-18.

²"The fundamental difference, then, which divides the evangelical from the sacerdotal idea is theological; the Gospel reposes on the sovereign pater-
nity of God, and his immediate relation through Jesus Christ with all men. But in this is contained a second difference which is as decisive and determinate—the conditions of acceptance with him are all spiritual and ethical. They are in no respect sensuous and formal, depending on rites observed or external relations established." (Fairbairn, "Studies in Religion and Theology," p. 131.)

the question of true prophet or false, fig tree or thistle, shepherd or robber, to the heart of the matter.

If certain congregated Christians alone possess and use the "social sacraments" by dependence on which is given that "fellowship with God" which every Christian receives "as an endowment of his personal life," so that they do constitute a real church of Jesus Christ, while the religious communions existing side by side with them are only schismatics and pretenders, then they will be holier men than these others. Where is the benefit of a depositary and channel of grace, if those who have the exclusive enjoyment of it are no better morally and spiritually than the members of other religious bodies? They will be better. They will be less worldly, less arrogant and contemptuous, purer in heart and life, with a heightened power of conscience, with a deeper peace and a larger joy, more self-sacrificing, more useful, with greater power in prayer and in persuasive speech with their fellows, humbler, more zealous; in a word, more Christlike. As a matter of fact, do they prove themselves to be so?

Collectively they will be clothed with a spiritual power that no organized company of schismatics can ever hope to know. Given an equal opportunity with those who have cut themselves off, through either willfulness or ignorance, from the divinely appointed ministry of grace, they will lead greater multitudes of men to the Saviour, both at home and in foreign lands. Not only so; but they will develop in their communicants, day by day, through that gift of the Holy Spirit which they alone can dispense, a higher type of Christian experience and character than is possible under a mere so-called ministry of the gospel. Have they done so?

"Thank God for the Historic Episcopate, the spinal cord of the Catholic Church"—such is the fervent doxology of the bishop whose words were quoted a moment ago—"which carries down from the Divine Head—Christ our Lord, God over all in heaven—the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and diffuses them through orders and sacraments and services, as nervous vitality permeates the body and fills it with life from the crown of the head to the

sole of the foot."¹ It is the members of such communions as the Church of Rome, the Orthodox Eastern Church, the Church of England, and the Protestant Episcopal Church that are here spoken of as sole recipients of these unceasing great gifts of the Spirit of God, which flow into the soul from Christ through the historic succession of bishops. No one save the members of these particular communions is a member of the Church, which is the body of Christ; no one but they can receive any of these "gifts of the Holy Ghost." Other Christian communions are like a human body destitute of the spinal cord. May we not be permitted, then, to ask for the evidence that the spiritual life of all other Christians is low and poor indeed, a mere flabby invertebrate life, as, according to the argument, it must be, relatively to that of Roman Catholic or Orthodox Eastern or Anglican or Protestant Episcopal Christians?²

Nor will it avail to say that the gift of covenanted grace may lie unused in the soul, like a talent buried in the earth. This negative result can hardly be conceived as possible. May un-

¹The Rt. Rev. G. F. Seymour, in "Church Reunion," p. 189.

²Dr. William Jones Seabury, in his "Introduction to the Study of Ecclesiastical Polity," would seem to think that the nonsuccessional churches, or "schismatical societies," as he calls them, are but poorly able to stand such a test. "And it may be assumed that such evidences as they give of the possession of the grace of God are due to the mercy of God, who does not hold them responsible for a position which is attributable to the fault of others rather than of themselves" (p. 50). "Such evidences as they give:" is that a word of truth?

Bishop Gore is less depreciatory (though he fails to touch the real point in question): "It follows then—not that God's grace has not worked, and worked largely through many an irregular ministry where it was exercised in good faith—but that a ministry not episcopally received is invalid—that is to say, falls outside the conditions of covenanted security and cannot justify itself in terms of the covenant." ("The Church and the Ministry," p. 313.)

But Dean Lefroy, not a sacerdotalist, represents the judgment in which most unbiased minds would probably feel constrained to unite: "Does the apostolic succession render its believers, or even its representatives, types of a superior ethical order? Are they illustrations of peculiar grace? Are men rendered especially holy, or conspicuously active, or self-denying, or diligent, by apostolic succession? . . . In real sadness it may be asserted that few hypotheses are more at variance with individual experience, not to refer to observation and to history." ("The Christian Ministry," p. 350.)

used grace be kept? But supposing that it be possible, and that any ten thousand Christians, let us say, who are taught that they have received this grace, fail to show the least moral and spiritual superiority over any ten thousand Christians who of a certainty have not received it, living side by side with them, one cannot help doubting the utility and by consequence the reality of the bestowment.

Take, for illustration, the somewhat analogous case of natural talent. A man may have from the hand of God a gift of reasoning, of imagination, of music, of eloquence, and through unfaithfulness in the use of it become no better reasoner, poet, musician, speaker, than his neighbor who is destitute of this special endowment. But if the men for whom such gifts are claimed fail *as a class*, through the ages, to show any superiority to the ungifted in the same calling, who would wish to share the responsibility of their lot? Or suppose that they should show inferiority.

It is a topic on which one has no heart to linger. Let us conclude with a brief recall of the main points in the discussion: (1) Nothing short of the plain teaching of the New Testament is sufficient proof of a priestly tactual succession of bishops through whom alone the Church of Christ can be perpetuated on earth; but when this proof is asked for, the answer is no better than a stone for bread. (2) Even if a line of episcopal ordinations were proved, as a historic fact, this would by no means show it to be a channel of mechanically imparted grace; but such a line has never been proved, and is confessedly incapable of proof. (3) The idea of this tactual impartation of grace is contrary to all that we know through reason, experience, and the Scriptures of the ways of God with men as living and rational souls. (4) The fruits of the supposed episcopal succession, in the lives of private church-members as well as of "bishops and other clergy," when compared with the lives of Christians and ministers of Christ generally, are unfavorable to belief in its reality.

5. CLAIM OF APOSTOLICITY FOR THE TWO LOWER ORDERS.

Not only in its main contention—the tactual line of apostolic bishops—but also in its claim of apostolicity for the two lower orders of the ministry,¹ the successional theory must forego Scripture proof.

(1) “Their [the New Testament churches’] deacons,” says Archbishop Whately, “appear to have had an office considerably different from those of our Church.”² But the word “considerably” is here inadequate. The diaconate of the Church of England retains hardly a vestige of resemblance to anything that is known as the diaconate in the New Testament. To say that the two are essentially, or in principle, the same, would be to say that financial ministration to the poor is essentially the same function as preaching, baptizing, and assisting in the administration of the Lord’s Supper. The name only has been retained.³

(2) And in the case of the presbyterate, even the name has been cast aside, and a totally different designation adopted. A name that the New Testament never gives to any office in the Church of Jesus, the name *priesthood*, is used for the office to which the deacon is promoted. He becomes a priest. Comparing, then, the parish priest of to-day with any member of the council of presbyters in an apostolic church, must the candid student say that the two offices are essentially the same, or that they are essentially and almost wholly different?

¹“It [the threefold apostolic ministry] has been called the historic backbone of the Church. It is more than this. It is the divinely appointed channel of life and grace. . . . The apostolic ministry in its threefold order pertains to the *esse* and not merely to the *bene esse* of the Church.” (Wirgman, “The Constitutional Authority of Bishops,” pp. 5, 6.)

²“The Kingdom of Christ,” Essay II., Sec. 20.

³Canon Liddon, it is true, has said that, according to the teaching of the New Testament, deacons, by a detachment of the plenitude of ministerial power from the Apostles, were “specially empowered to preach and to administer the sacrament of baptism.” (“Clerical Life and Work,” p. 293.) But how the great and courageous High-Church preacher could get the consent of his mind to make such an assertion, it is not very easy to understand.

If, therefore, it be held that the threefold ministry is a necessary part of the divine constitution of the Church, one of these two things must also be taken as true: either the requirement of this divine law is satisfied in the mere existence of three ministerial orders, without reference to their functions, the triple number alone being essential, or this requirement has been violated outright in the Anglican, as indeed in every other, Church.

6. THE EPISCOPATE AS A CENTER OF UNITY.

Let us now recall the fact that Cyprian put forth his doctrine of the episcopate, as Irenæus had put forth his, and Ignatius his, in the interest of ecclesiastical unity. It is a cause inexpressibly dear to the Christian heart. It was dear to the heart of the newly converted but strong and self-denying martyr-bishop of Carthage. The treatise which may be taken as in some sort the key of interpretation to all his writings is "On the Unity of the Church." "The episcopate," so he insists in this little book, "is one, each part of which is held by each for the whole. The Church also is one, which is spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by the increase of fruitfulness" (c. 5). Nor is it any wonder that a man of Cyprian's creed should be an apologist of unity. For he cannot even think of the salvation of a soul outside the Catholic Church: schism as well as heresy is fatal. Believing thus, how could he do less than his best to maintain the undivided Church? It was to him the one refuge of imperiled souls?

But the conception of the episcopate as a center of unity is not peculiar to those first centuries. It has persisted as a formative ecclesiastic idea. In the newer as in the older episcopal communions, in the evangelical as in the sacerdotal, it is operative to-day.¹

Is the bishop, then, in point of fact, an appreciable center of unity? As truly as the governor of a state, or the president of

¹"Hence the episcopate, which is the continuation of the Apostolic ministry, appears as the divinely appointed center of the unity of the visible Church." (Seabury, "Introduction to the Study of Ecclesiastical Polity," p. 49.)

"We do hereby affirm that the Christian unity, now so earnestly desired by the memorialists, can be restored only by the return of all Christian

any voluntary society, or the Christian pastor of a local congregation. The experience of the centuries, as well as the nature of the case, may certainly put this question outside the range of reasonable doubt.

Nevertheless, it may still be asked, Might not some other method have been better? Congregationalism finds a bond of union in its National Council of ministers and lay delegates, and Presbyterianism in its General Assembly of teaching and of ruling elders. If either of these methods had been followed in Christianity from the beginning, the evils peculiarly incident to the bishop's office would have been avoided. And might not one or the other of them have been sufficient? Would it not have been sufficient in the Church's formative period—in the time of Ignatius, of Irenæus, of Cyprian—when, by reason of repeated persecutions from without and powerful heresies within, threatening to scatter and devour, the demand for Christian unity was in the highest degree imperative? Would it not have been sufficient even in the heterogeneous populations and amid the ignorance and turbulence of the Dark Ages—and have made them somewhat less dark? It may be so. One might reconstruct the history of the Church from the standpoint of such a hypothesis, so as to show through the power of imagination a much fairer

communions to the principles of unity exemplified by the undivided Catholic Church during the first ages of its existence, which principles we believe to be the substantial Deposit of Christian Faith and Order committed by Christ and his Apostles to the Church unto the end of the world. . . .

"As inherent parts of this sacred Deposit, and therefore as essential to the restoration of unity among the divided branches of Christendom, we account the following, to wit, . . .

"iv. The Historic Episcopate." Declaration of the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, October 20, 1886.

"Q. What is another connectional bond?

"A. The Joint Itinerant Superintendency—equally related to the whole Church and supported by the whole Church." (McTyeire, "A Catechism of Church Government," pp. 123, 124.)

"Q. Which, then, is the better form of Episcopacy?

"A. If to promote unity and repress schism be the main end and purpose of this form of ecclesiastical polity, the better form is that which is *general*, not that which is *diocesan*." (*Ibid.*, p. 85.)

picture than has in fact appeared. But probably few historians would be willing to do it. The need of some sort of personal leadership and superintendence would be seriously felt. And at best the "ifs" of historic study are illusory guides.

But while the episcopate may well be recognized as an effective unifier of Christian congregations, it cannot be forgotten that false or exorbitant claims, on the part of bishop or any other ruler, do not make for real unity. These are divisive forces.¹ For a time, or even, as men count the years, for a very long time, they do in some instances achieve their purpose. They have achieved it with large success, though with equally large failure, in the Church of Rome. But the purpose itself is false. The ideal is unchristian. It is not organism but aggregation, the forcing of men together by external pressure—as if they were so many blocks of concrete to be shaped and placed, instead of living persons to be guided and governed into unity. Will it ultimately succeed? It cannot, unless the moral progress of the world is to be inhibited. Men will discover and reject the false or irrational rule.

Dean E. M. Goulbourn, a most earnest and devout High Churchman, describes the English Establishment as in danger of disastrous schism. The persistent contending of the High-Church and the Low-Church party has of late "imperilled the existence of their common mother." "Then," he continues, "just as this struggle is growing desperate, a cry is raised, by those who are jealous of the Church's position, for her disestablishment and disendowment—steps which, if carried into effect, would certainly weaken her already feeble powers of coherence, and split her into two or three narrow factions." Let us earnest-

¹"Then as to the danger of schism, nothing can be more calculated to create or increase it than to add to all the other sources of difference among Christians these additional ones resulting from the theory we are considering [that of a personal apostolic succession]. . . . In short, there is no imaginable limit to the schisms that may be introduced and kept up through the operation of these principles, advocated especially with a view to the repression of schism." (Whately, "The Kingdom of Christ," Essay ii., sec. 31.)

²"The Holy Catholic Church," p. 118.

ly hope that it is not true—believing, as we may, that disestablishment, by giving relief from disabling embarrassments and burdens, would prove a signal blessing. But if it be true, then the Church of England herself is held together not by the Episcopal Succession which she so strongly commends as an indispensable principle of the Church's unity, but by the endowments and control of the state.

7. THE REAL APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

The fable has its moral. The myth is an embodiment of certain visionary ideas about earth or sky. Similarly the ecclesiastic priesthood represents, in distorted form, a truth of life and religion. It represents the universal need of some purely human mediation between God and the soul. And undoubtedly this is a truth; for how many of us would ever find our way to the Father of spirits, "though he is not far from each one of us," were it not for the friends who come with knowledge, sympathy, persuasion, personal example, to lead their fellows to him? The salvation of men is verily by God drawing near to them through their fellow-men.

Now of this great spiritual reality, the ecclesiastic priesthood presents a superstitious perversion. And similar to the priestly office is the tactual succession upon which it is wont to rest its claim. As the former differs from the Christian priesthood, so the latter differs from the ministerial succession in the gospel of Christ. It is the difference between the unreal and the real. For as there is a true priesthood, so there is a true ministerial succession. Its origin is unmistakably shown in the Scriptures; its spiritual fruits are manifest far and wide in the world of to-day.

(1) It is a *divine* succession. It comes from above, and through no human intermediaries.¹ Out of what personal ex-

¹"There are in the last analysis two, and only two, coherent theories of the origin and character of the Christian ministry. Of these one makes the minister the elected delegate of the congregation; in teaching and ministering he exerts an authority which he derives from his flock. The other traces ministerial authority to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, who deposited it in its fullness in the College of Apostles." (Liddon, sermon on "A Father

perience does it arise? Out of the call of God in the soul and the power of the Spirit which follows upon the whole-hearted response to that call. It is the succession which began with the prophets of Jehovah, proclaiming his will and foretelling, according to the knowledge given them, the Christ who was to come. It was exemplified in Elijah the prophet and John the prophet "and more than a prophet." Here were two men in two far-separated ages of the Church's history; two men but one calling, one spirit, one power of word and deed, so that the very name of the earlier preacher was given by the Lord of them both, and of us all, to the later. It is the succession in which the Apostles lived and wrought. Therefore it is those who are called with the same essential calling and are quickened by the same Spirit of power that follow in the way of prophet and Apostle, now and ever.

With obedience to such a vocation, a man must be a true minister of Jesus Christ. Without it he cannot be. The vocation itself speaks with the voice of authority and is imperative.

(2) It is *ecclesiastical*. Not indeed necessarily so. Even if the church with which he is connected should refuse its indorsement, the man sent of God must, as opportunity offers, teach and preach Jesus Christ. But such a case would be exceptional and rare. Ordinarily the Christian preacher will go forth under the authority and approval of the Christian congregation. The call of God in the soul will take outward form in the call of the Church.

Was it not so in the apostolic churches? The people were to accept or reject him who came to them, or rose up among them, professing to be a prophet of God. For though they might themselves be unable to interpret the will of God in thrilling and convincing speech, yet it was within their province to judge the prophetic word of others—as one need not be himself a creative

in Christ," in "Clerical Life and Work.") There is certainly a third coherent theory that remains undissolved by "the last analysis"—namely, that the vocation to the Christian ministry is directly from the Spirit of God, attested by Scripture signs, and officially recognized by the constituted authorities of some Christian communion.

poet or musician in order to perceive what true poetry or music is. Though unable to do the work of a prophet, all who were of the truth were qualified to "receive a prophet in the name of a prophet"—and share in his reward.

"All who were of the truth"—for did not the Master himself say that these, and not only official teachers or preachers, are they who hear his voice? No matter how unschooled or down-trodden, they may know him and walk in the very light of God. It was of such as these, indeed, that the first Christian congregations were, to a large extent, composed. "Not many wise after the flesh, . . . not many noble." Slaves, children of barbarians, common people, these, converted to Christ, seem for the most part to have made up the churches to which the chief of the Apostles ministered. And yet what potentiality of spiritual knowledge he was able to see in them all! So he prays for them: "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment;"¹ "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened;"² "That ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding."³ What more could he have desired for the teachers themselves than he did repeatedly ask of God for their congregations of Christian believers, worshipers, hearers?

As a matter of fact, the gift of speaking God's word would be fruitless and vain without its complement, the hearer's gift of recognizing that spoken word. It would fall dead upon his ears. Only he that has ears can hear: only he that is "spiritual" can "judge."⁴

But did not our Lord bid his disciples "judge not?" Truly so; and at the same time to "beware of false prophets," who should be known by "their fruits."⁵ Accordingly the Christian people, while admonished by their apostolic teachers to "despise not prophesyings," were at the same time bidden to "prove all

¹Phil. i. 9. ²Eph. i. 17. ³Col. i. 19. ⁴1 Cor. ii. 15. ⁵Matt. vii. 1, 15, 16.

things" and "hold fast that which is good."¹ They must "prove the spirits, whether they are of God,"² and were commended for trying "them who call themselves apostles and they are not," and finding them false.³ To some of them had been given a special gift of the "discerning of spirits."⁴ To them all had been given somewhat of this spiritual discernment: "Let the prophets speak by two or three, and let the others discern (*διακρίνω*, discriminate, judge)."⁵ The Apostle Paul specifically commends the exercise of their personal judgment with reference to certain of his own teachings and counsels.⁶ It was their responsibility, which they could not blamelessly lay aside. It was their right, which could not righteously be wrested from them.

Thus, then, has it been with those whom God has sent forth to tell in living speech his word of life, in the successive generations of the Church. They are also the sent ones of Christ's people. This is their truest ordination. They are "tried, examined, and admitted" into their ministry, either directly or through representatives, by the Christian congregation.

Their official ministrations, let it ever be remembered, are not necessary to originate a church. Only the presence of "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus," is required or sufficient for that. Such, indeed, is the declared condition where the words "catholic church" appear for the first time in Christian literature: "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church (*ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία*)."⁷ It is true now, even as in the beginning. And just as such a church, true and therefore catholic, is authorized, so far as it shares in the mind of Christ, to hold the power of the "keys," so likewise is it authorized to approve or refuse those who would be received by it as witness-bearers and ministers of the gospel.

(3) It is *evangelical*. The all-inclusive truth with which it has been intrusted is the good news of Divine redeeming grace. Knowledge, through Him who could say, "He that hath seen me

¹ 1 Thess. v. 21.² Rev. ii. 2.³ 1 Cor. xiv. 29.⁴ 1 John iv. 1.⁵ 1 Cor. xii. 10.⁶ 1 Cor. x. 15; xi. 13.⁷ Ignatius, "To the Smyrnæans," 8.

hath seen the Father;" peace, through the blood of his cross; love, from its fountain in the self-giving of God since the foundation of the world; life, in Him who died for us and rose again, himself the Resurrection and the Life: these, even from apostolic days, have been its distinct and distinctive messages. In the twentieth century, as in the first, the Christ of the Cross—reconciliation and communion with God in him—is its theme.

This is the message that I bring,
A message angels fain would sing:
"Oh, be ye reconciled," thus saith your Lord and King,
"Oh, be ye reconciled to God."

(4) It is a succession *in spiritual gifts*. Because to communicate through speech to the assembled congregation this living word of God, calls for the gift of preaching. "And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith."¹ Not for the administration of the sacraments, divinely ordained though they are, were men called with a special calling and dowered with a special gift in the apostolic churches. But there has been such a gift of preaching, from the days of the Apostles and their fellow-ministers until now. Therefore it is the office of a preacher, in season and out of season, according to the ability that God gives him, to speak "to the people all the words of this Life." He was indeed a gospeler who wrote out of the fullness of his heart: "Necessity is laid upon me; for woe is me if I preach not the gospel. . . . I have a stewardship intrusted to me."² And so likewise are those who have their succession from him.

(5) It is *apostolic*. The name is true. Because it connotes not only essentially the same inner vocation, the same truth of redemption, and the same gift of preaching that came to the Apostles who saw the Lord, but also essentially the same spirit of love and labor that was in them. When Francis Asbury, the pioneer Protestant bishop of the New World, would tell upon what he

¹Rom. xii. 6-8.

²1 Cor. ix. 16, 17.

rested his authority as a superintendent, or bishop, in the Church, he dared to say, among other things: "Because the signs of an apostle have been seen in me." Probably no one who knew his career would have been disposed to doubt this fact. And was it not the best possible proof of a truly divine authority? To brave all dangers, to practice all self-denials, to spend one's strength from youth to old age in prayer and the ministry of the word, to care through long years for the widely separated churches, homeless yet happy, as poor yet making many rich, till one is able to look in the faces of fellow-Christians in many regions and say, "The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord"—it is this spirit of love and labor, rather than any ordaining hands, that will mark one's office and ministry as genuinely apostolic.

Moreover, this apostolic succession, evangelic not priestly, spiritual not legal, catholic not exclusive, scriptural rather than ecclesiastic, proclaiming the complete brotherhood of all who trust the one Christ as Lord and Saviour, makes not for division but for unity in the Church of God.

XIII.

THE BISHOP: FROM DIOCESAN TO POPE.

THE propension toward external catholic unity was not satisfied with the little bishoprics of the second and third centuries. Might it not find a common center, here and there, about which not congregations but bishoprics themselves could be grouped? At any rate, it began to feel its way toward some such larger embodiment. Much more naturally than the deacons' office called for an archdeacon and the presbyters' office for an archpresbyter, did the bishops' office call for an archbishop.

I. ORIGIN OF THE ARCHBISHOP.

In response to such a demand, the provincial councils rendered an important service. For by the beginning of the third century these councils had begun to be held with some degree of frequency, and were attended by all the bishops of a province. Reasonably enough the chief city of a province, the metropolis, was the chosen place of meeting. And who should preside over their proceedings? At first the senior bishop of those in attendance was frequently elected president; but afterwards it came to be the custom to select for the presidency the pastor of the church in which the council met. So this host of the council, this bishop of the church in the metropolis, acquired a distinction among his fellow-bishops, and after a time, developing as he did into the metropolitan, or archbishop,¹ became a distinct center of unity for the province.

For example, we see Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, calling

¹The metropolitan usually went by the name of archbishop, but the title of archbishop was given also to the patriarch when he arose, and indeed it seems to have been somewhat of a floating title. But "the distinction between an archbishop and a metropolitan has died out, and no difference except that which is nominal exists between them." (Blunt, "Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology," Art. "Archbishop.") In the East the name now regularly used is metropolitan; in the West, archbishop.

councils of all the bishops of the province to decide certain grave questions of discipline. This he did in virtue of his metropolitan position. To preside in such councils, to communicate their decisions to the presiding bishops of other provinces, to take the leading part in episcopal ordinations, to act as arbiter in the case of a contested episcopal election—these were the metropolitan's other principal duties. He was *arch*-bishop. And thus a more general superintendence of the Church's territory was effected.

2. ORIGIN OF THE PATRIARCHATE.

But the ideal was not yet attained: the process of centralization must still go on. Let the metropolitans, in their turn, be united under a chief. And this, like the previous step, was favored by the organization of the civil government. For under Constantine the Great the empire had been laid off for administrative purposes into dioceses, each of which included two or more provinces; and so the bishop of the chief city of one of these political dioceses, or in some instances of two or more dioceses combined, claimed a position of oversight with respect to his fellow-metropolitans, corresponding in a general way to that of the metropolitans with respect to the bishops over whom they presided. He became what might have been called an "arch-metropolitan." The Council of Nice (325) recognized this development, and decreed that the "ancient custom" should still be observed—namely, that "the bishop of Alexandria have rule over all these [the provinces of Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis], since this also is customary with the bishop of Rome; likewise also at Antioch let the churches retain their privileges."¹

Now the territory over which each of these chief metropolitans presided, was called in ecclesiastical, as well as in political, language a diocese. About the same time the territory of an ordinary bishop, which had hitherto been called a "parish," came to be known in the West as a diocese; and perhaps a little later the same name was given to the territory of a metropolitan, or

¹Council of Nice, can. vi.

archbishop. So at this time there were no fewer than three territorial divisions of the Church, related to each other as including and included, that bore the name "diocese." Let us not get them confused: there was the diocese of the chief metropolitan, that of the metropolitan, or archbishop, and that of the ordinary bishop, or as he came to be called the suffragan (*assistant* to the archbishop). With the word in the latter two senses—the diocese of the archbishop and the diocese of the ordinary bishop, or suffragan—we are still familiar.

Now the chief metropolitans were, after a time, called patriarchs—a name which had formerly been given as an honorary title to bishops in general, and by way of eminence to the bishop of Alexandria; and their dioceses were more specifically designated as patriarchates.

Over a hundred years after the Nicæan Council, the Council of Chalcedon (451) marked the completion of the patriarchal system by recognizing five distinct and coördinate patriarchates—namely, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem. Of these, however, Jerusalem was more honorary than actual.¹

What powers, over and above those of the metropolitan, was the patriarch permitted to exercise? He could ordain metropolitans, convoke and preside over councils of his patriarchate, receive appeals from metropolitan councils or metropolitan bishops, censure metropolitan bishops and in some cases their suffragans. These were his chief functions.²

3. PRE-EMINENCE OF THE ROMAN PATRIARCH.

And now as to the relation of these patriarchs among themselves. Should they stand exactly coequal in office, or should one of them take a position of presidency and leadership toward

¹The patriarch of Jerusalem did not preside over a whole diocese—only over Palestine and Arabia. Nor did the patriarch of Antioch preside over quite the whole of the vast diocese of fifteen provinces in which his see was situated.

²Alzog, "Universal Church History" (E. T.), I. 668; Blunt, Dict. Historical and Doctrinal Theology, Art. "Archbishop."

the rest? Should there be an *arch*-patriarch? Here again the principle of external unity called for some sort of episcopal primacy.

Nor was there any reason for hesitation as to who the chosen chief should be. The patriarch of Jerusalem? No; the holy ancient Jerusalem was no more. Its site, desecrated by pagan temples and statues and in possession of a pagan colony, had been named after a pagan emperor's family and a god of Rome—Ælia Capitolina. Not until the fourth century did it begin to win back its own sacred and beautiful name. And, what was infinitely worse, Israel as a race had rejected Jesus their Messiah. They were not Christians. Accordingly, as we have seen, the patriarchate of Jerusalem was chiefly nominal. Then, too, Jerusalem was out of the way, not central to the Church and the Empire. If a governmental and strategic center was to be chosen for the Church, it could not be in the far Land of Israel.

Might the bishop of Ephesus, then, or of Corinth or of Alexandria be made universal patriarch? These were not universal cities. There was but one. Rome, therefore, had no serious rival. It had already given its name to the Empire, and now was to cherish the dream of giving it in like manner to the Church.

All roads led to Rome: everybody went there. Especially did Christians meet together there from all countries. For Rome was the capital of the Empire, which was the civilized world. It had a population of perhaps two and a half millions, but that was comparatively a small matter: it was "the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," the central seat of the King-people, the world-city. East and West, men had long been accustomed to look toward it for judgment, authority, law. "I appeal unto Cæsar," said Paul the Jew (though also a freeborn Roman), beset by his enemies in Palestine. "Unto Cæsar," replied the procurator, "shalt thou go."

Now let us remember that the Church had been laying off her territory along the lines of the imperial administration—had been

doing so, some have thought, from apostolic days.¹ But more than this: in the fourth century Christianity was officially recognized as the religion of the Empire—which meant the religion of the civilized world regarded as under the headship of Rome. If, therefore, the bishop of such a city as Carthage, for example, might claim precedence over the other bishops of the province, and if the bishop of such a city as Alexandria might claim precedence over the other metropolitan bishops of the civil diocese, so likewise might the bishop of such a city as Rome claim precedence over the other chief bishops of all the civil dioceses, and thus become patriarch of patriarchs.

In this same connection it might be remarked that the patriarchal see of Antioch was held in higher honor than that of Jerusalem, the see of Alexandria than that of Antioch, and the see of Constantinople, or New Rome, when it arose, in higher honor than that of any of the other three—each greater city commanding the greater honor for its episcopal see. Why, then, should not the same rule apply to Old Rome, the chief city of the Empire and the world?

Indeed, the case was stronger. For the church in Rome was the only church of apostolic origin in the West; it was highly commended in the great inspired Epistle to the Romans,² it was sanctified by the blood of martyrs—yes, of a goodly succession of martyrs. Had not pagan Rome made herself “drunk with the blood of the saints?” Men like Ignatius and the monk Telemachus had even journeyed from the far East, “following a hundred sunsets,” on to Rome, there to lay down their lives for Christ. Had not even the two chief Apostles, Peter and Paul, made the soil of the great Christian city sacred with their witnessing blood?

But still more, the Roman see had been founded, according to the general belief, by the Apostle Peter, and from him in regular order its subsequent bishops were supposed to have descended. The bishop of Rome, then, was accepted both in Rome itself and elsewhere as in the Petrine succession. But Peter held the high-

¹Ramsay, “St Paul the Traveler,” pp 135, 136.

²Rom. i: 8-12.

est place among the original Twelve. Christ had said to him: "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church." Was it not, therefore, more than fitting, was it not the revealed will of Christ—so it began to be asked about the beginning of the third century or sooner—that Peter's successor in the see of Rome should be chief bishop to the whole Church? For Peter's primacy, it was assumed, must be regarded as official and transmissible, not merely personal.

It is true, this belief that Peter was bishop of Rome—"for twenty-five years, one month, and nine days," the legend runs—and that he started a line of successors immediately from himself, was groundless. So far from having this Apostle for its first bishop and the founder of an episcopal line, there is good reason to believe that the church in Rome had no bishop at all, except the presbyter-bishops, till the second quarter of the second century.¹ But the legend of Peter's Chair was believed, like a thousand others, upon no basis of historic proof and without questioning. And it produced the same effect upon the believer's mind as if it had been a fact.

Then, too, Rome was orthodox. Comparatively undisturbed by theological controversies, which raged for long periods of time in the East, Rome uniformly chose the side that proved to be dominant—as, for instance, in the long and passionate controversies that arose concerning the person of Christ the Saviour. Irenæus in his day had recommended that in difficult matters of controversy appeal ought to be made to "the very great, the very ancient, and universally known church founded and organized at

¹Clement, writing in the name of the church in Rome to the church in Corinth, is silent as to a bishop in either city. Ignatius, writing, in the early part of the second century, to various churches, insists on obedience to the bishop—except in the epistle to the Romans; and here he not only delivers no such exhortation, but makes no mention of a bishop in their church at all. Hermas, in "The Pastor," says, "Those who preside over the church [in Rome];" and again, "The old woman [the Church] asked me, if I had yet given the book to the *presbyters*. . . . But you will read the words in this city, along with the presbyters *who preside over the church* [in Rome]." (Vis. ii., 2, 4.)

Rome by the most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul;" and subsequent doctrinal decisions of this church, made through its bishops, served to increase its judicial teaching prestige and authority." For Rome taught rather than investigated, judged rather than debated, commanded rather than discussed.

Yet we are not to think of the church at Rome in those early days as simply striving after authority over the other churches. Undoubtedly she did that, but she also cared for them. She was kind and beneficent toward them. There is proof of her sending contributions to supply the needs of distant congregations. Ignatius, in the Salutation of his Epistle to the Roman Church, speaks of it not only as "the church which presides in the place of the region of the Romans," but, among other additional things, as the church which "presides over love." He even declares with characteristic fervor, "I am afraid of your love, lest it should be an injury"—lest it should incite them to prayers and efforts to prevent the martyrdom which he so eagerly coveted. In this most eminent and probably wealthiest of the Christian communities, there was something of the spirit of "the big brother" toward the other Christian communities throughout the world. Why should it not have awakened in noble minds some responsive spirit of gratitude and reverence? Or to ignoble minds this same wealth and beneficence of Rome might suggest as a motive "the thrift that follows fawning."

"Against Heresies," III, 3, 2. Irenaeus's reference to the founding of this church, it will be noted, is contrary to the facts as given in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. See especially ch. i. 13-15.

*Not, however, that this rule was without any exception. It seems certain, for example, that the Roman bishop Liberius (352-361) subscribed a semi-Arian creed, and that Honorius I. (621-636) accepted and taught the Monothelite heresy, for which he was anathematized by the Sixth General Council, and at the same time by the pope, Leo II, who not only signed the Decrees but *renewed the anathema* upon the heretical pope—damaging facts to the modern decree of papal infallibility. Alzog speaks, from the Roman Catholic view-point, of "the imprudent course of Pope Honorius in the case of the Monothelites," and ventures to say that, "though expressing himself inaccurately, he thought correctly." ("Universal Church History," Vol. I., pp. 635, 636.) But the apology is made in the face of sun-clear facts.

By such considerations as these, then, the idea of an ecclesiastical headship at Rome would be strongly commended. Nor does it seem to have met with any marked opposition. The Christian leaders, both theological and administrative, were ready to endorse it.¹

Let the single example of Cyprian be taken as representative here of the early centuries. Strenuously resisting any assumption, on the part of the Roman see, of a supremacy of jurisdiction, he would nevertheless ascribe to it, for the sake of unity and in accordance with what were accepted by him as scriptural and historic facts, a certain primacy. "That he might set forth unity," writes the illustrious Carthaginian pastor, "he arranged by his authority the origin of that unity as beginning from one. Assuredly the rest of the Apostles were the same as was Peter, indorsed with a like authority both of honor and of power; but the beginning proceeds from unity."² It must be carefully borne in mind, however, that the primacy, or "beginning from unity," here indicated, is strictly one of honor and not of authority.

Nor was it only individual leaders in the Church that acknowledged the primacy of Rome. The General Councils, speaking with supreme authority, did the same. The Council of Constantinople (381) declared that the bishop of Constantinople should be honored *next to the bishop of Rome*,³ and the Council of Chalcedon (451), referring to this action, did itself "enact and decree the same things concerning the privileges of the most holy Church of Constantinople, which is New Rome."⁴

With utter silence as to Roman jurisdiction, these Councils did have a word to say for Roman primacy of honor.

¹Some of them, outside the Roman communion, would be ready to indorse it at the present time: "Though we would grant the Church of Rome her ancient primacy," says an English bishop, "yet we cannot accept it as now offered, transformed into a quasi-sacramental headship."

²"On the Unity of the Church," 4. Cf. Ep. XXXIX. (XLII.), 5.

³"The bishop of Constantinople, however, shall have the prerogative of honor after the bishop of Rome; because Constantinople is New Rome." (Council of Constantinople, Can. III.)

⁴Council of Chalcedon, Can. XXVIII.

4. THE MONARCHICAL CLAIM OF ROME.

Here, then, emerges what might be looked upon as a completely organized system of universal government: the General Council the supreme legislative and judicial authority (for such it had come to be), and the bishop of Rome the first bishop of the Church. Could it be reasonably objected to or broken up? Should it not be perpetuated through the after ages?

However such a question may be answered, it is certain that the system was not perpetuated. And the main immediate cause of its failure was the monarchical aggressions of Rome itself. The bishop of that venerable imperial city and occupant of the so-called chair of Peter would not consent to be first among equals in the oligarchy of patriarchs. He must have supremacy of jurisdiction, ruling alone, the visible monarch of the Kingdom of Christ. To become one of the "five towers," as Dr. Philip Schaff has called the Patriarchs, "in the edifice of the Catholic hierarchy of the Græco-Roman Empire," would have seemed, according to his conception, to be fixing himself in a false attitude. Not a tower, he was the one rock upon which the Christian Ecclesia had been built. Hence the Roman bishop refused to be called *patriarch*, as a mere oligarchical title, and in due time appropriated the monarchical title of *pope*.

Not, of course, that this title—applied preëminently to the bishop of Rome about the year 500—was in itself monarchical. In its common meaning it was farther from monarchism than was the title "patriarch." It was simply the child's name for "father" (*papa*), and it is even now given familiarly to all priests in the Russian Church—just as Roman priests also are, more seriously, called "father."¹

Does "papa" seem a humble title for the great Roman patriarch, claiming universality of dominion, to take? So also was "emperor" (*imperator*, general, commander-in-chief) a com-

¹In the West it had been applied from very early times to bishops, and afterwards to patriarchs, as bishops by way of eminence, *first fathers*. But "patriarch" was here the official designation; and on this account the bishop of Rome refused to share it.

paratively humble title as assumed by Augustus Cæsar; but it soon disclosed a significance above that of "king."¹

The development of the papacy was intermittent but persistent. From the latter part of the second century onward the Roman bishops were prone to put forth acts or pursue courses of action that implied the right to monarchical rulership in the whole Church. Victor I., about the year 196, declared the Asian churches, which, against his judgment and will, celebrated the Easter festival on the day of the Jewish passover, to be cut off from the common unity of the Church—an event which has been described as marking "the true birthday of the papacy." Stephen I. (253-257) acted in a similar manner toward the North African churches, in the rebaptism controversy. Siricius, in 385, issued an ordinance of clerical celibacy, which has the distinction of being known as the first papal decretal. Innocent I. (402-417), a canonized saint, claimed the right to be heard in all the more important causes; and it was the pronouncement of his judgment in the Pelagian controversy that caused Augustine, his greatest contemporary, to exclaim: "Rome has spoken, the cause is concluded." Such were some of the aggressive acts that foretokened, during a period of two and a half centuries, the coming of "the first pope," Leo the Great.

5. LEO THE GREAT AS FOUNDER OF THE PAPACY.

It was in the person of Leo the Great (440-461) that the full "papal consciousness" found its first historic expression. Of the circumstances of this typical churchman's birth and death nothing is known. The outlines of his public career, however, have been well attested. Leo, though by no means of a philosophic temperament, had ability as a systematic theologian. What he saw he saw clearly. Untroubled with doubts and speculations, he got a firm grasp upon a system of dogmatic divinity. He was also something of a preacher—the first bishop of Rome, so far as the record shows, of which as much may be said.

¹For an interesting explanation of the significance of the name "pope," see Stanley, "Christian Institutions," ch. xi., sec. 4.

But all this must serve as a background for Leo's peculiar aptitude for administration. He knew how to rule with a commanding, insistent, successful hand. The spirit, as described in one of his letters, in which he entered upon the episcopal office, was indeed most distrustful and devout: "For what is so unwonted and so dismaying as labor to the frail, exaltation to the humble, dignity to the undeserving? And yet we do not despair nor lose heart, because we put our trust not in ourselves but in Him who works in us." But the "labor" which Leo believed that even one so "frail" as he was called to undergo was the care and rulership of the universal Church. Personally he confessed the deepest unworthiness; officially he held that men could resist his mandates only at the peril of their souls.¹

To accept an honorable primacy was not in the least of this Roman bishop's thoughts. He cared to claim nothing less than a spiritual dictatorship, an episcopal Cæsarism. And yet of personal ambition he showed no sign.

Indeed, there need be no doubt of the strength and sincerity of Leo's convictions, nor of the inflexible resoluteness with which, through a pontificate of twenty-one years, he gave them effect. This "first of the popes" was a man of one absorbing idea, which found expression in one intolerant and unrelenting purpose. His significance in the development of the papacy has been likened to that of Cyprian in the development of the sacerdotal episcopacy. He lived that he might make Rome what he supposed she was divinely intended to become, the center of unity and authority for the Christian world. For verily he believed that it was the very wisdom of God that this greatest of cities should have gained and maintained her vast empire for the express purpose that, when Christianity came, she might have the facilities and the power to bestow it upon all the nations of the earth. And if so, what could be plainer than that the bishop of Rome should preside over and direct the Christian world-movement?

¹"Yet any one who holds that the headship must be denied to Peter cannot really diminish his dignity, but is puffed up with the breath of pride, and plunges himself into the lowest depth." (Ep. X., 2.)

As to the course of action by which Leo sought to do his providential part in the achievement of this stupendous purpose, four noteworthy illustrations may be mentioned: (1) The churches of North Africa, which had enjoyed the ministrations of such eminent teachers as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, were brought under his control—for there was no Cyprian now to resist his encroachments. He demanded that the decisions of their councils be sent him for confirmation, and that their bishops should have the right of appeal from the court of their metropolitans to the court of Rome. This right of appeal, indeed, he established throughout the West and claimed for the whole Church. (2) In Gaul a bishop had been deposed by a council under the direction of Hilary of Arles, the primate¹ of the Gallican Church. The deposed bishop appealed to Rome, and was restored to his office; and Hilary's jurisdiction was restricted to his own province. (3) Through Leo's influence, as may be believed, the feeble Emperor Valentinian III. issued an edict declaring the primacy of Rome, and forbidding "the bishops of Gaul, as well as those of other provinces," to make any innovation on the established order in their churches "without the authority of the venerable Father of the Eternal City." (4) The Council of Chalcedon was presided over by Leo, in the person of his legates, and its decision of the great Christological controversy was, in a very appreciable measure, determined by a letter from his hand to Flavian, bishop of Constantinople. "Peter has spoken by the mouth of Leo," shouted the Council on the reading of this letter. And the canons of the Council were sent him for confirmation.

To Leo the Great, more than to any other one man—if it be not idle to draw such comparisons—the Church of Rome is indebted for her ecclesiastical dominion through the Middle Ages and unto the twentieth century.

¹"Primates . . . are constituted by the Church with the consent of the State, such as the primate of Germany (Nuremberg), of Spain (Toledo), of France (Lyons), . . . of England (Canterbury and York). . . . A primate presides over the ecclesiastical capital of a country, and properly is

6. THE PAPAL COMPARED WITH THE CYPRIANIC CLAIM.

And now before passing from this topic let us give a moment's distinct attention to the ground on which the assertion of Roman ecclesiastic supremacy, thus fully developed, rested. It was closely similar to the ground on which the claim of monarchic episcopacy rested. The Church, said Cyprian two hundred years before—speaking for himself and the High Churchmen of all ages—is in the bishops; for only through them the grace of God is sacramentally mediated to the people. No bishops, no Church. But Leo, speaking for himself and the papists of all ages, declared that the Church is in the pope. For Peter alone received ministerial power immediately from Christ and mediated it to the line of his successors, the bishops of Rome. No pope, no Church.¹ The essential difference, therefore, between the High Church and the papal dogma is, that the one finds an indispensable succession of coequal bishops from the whole body of Apostles, while the other finds an indispensable succession of universal bishops from the chief of the Apostles.

But again, are we to suppose that these repeated aggressions of Rome were quietly acquiesced in by the churchmen of those early days? On the contrary, they were strenuously resisted—in the East never really submitted to. Said Polycrates, the venerable bishop of Ephesus, in answer to the edict of Victor I. in the Easter controversy: "I am not affrighted by terrifying words, for those greater than I have said, 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'"² Said the first great Latin father, Tertullian, concerning the same violent edict: "O edict, on which cannot be in-

the superior of many archbishops." (Blunt, Dict. of Historical and Doctrinal Theology, Art. "Archbishop.")

¹"But this mysterious function [the spreading of Christian truth for the salvation of the world] the Lord wished indeed to be the concern of all the Apostles, but in such a way that he has placed the principal charge on the blessed Peter, chief of all the Apostles; and from him as from the Head wishes his gifts to flow to all the body; so that any one who dares to secede from Peter's solid rock may understand that he has no part nor lot in the divine mystery." (Leo, Ep. X. 1.)

²Eusebius, H. E., V. xxiv. 7.

scribed, 'Good deed.'"¹ But again let us take Cyprian as the most significant example. When the bishop of Rome, Stephen I., endeavored to enforce his decision of the question of re-baptism upon the churches of North Africa, Cyprian, from his metropolitan position among them, opposed Stephen with all the powers at his command. At one of the North African councils called by him to consider the matter, Cyprian, with his colleagues, wrote a letter to Stephen—addressing him as an equal only, "dearest brother"—in which they reminded him, with mingled kindly respect and firmness of judgment, that "each prelate has in the administration of the Church his will free, as he shall give account of himself to the Lord."² Not to a bishop of bishops—"for no one of us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, or by tyrannical terror forces his colleagues to obeying"—but to the Lord only was any bishop, prominent or obscure, in city or hamlet, to give account of his official administration.

But in the West such protests availed very little—ultimately nothing at all. For the bishops had already prepared the way, unconsciously—and none had done it more effectually than the illustrious bishop of Carthage himself—for these very usurpations of the Roman see. When they said, "The bishops are ecclesiastical monarchs, they are the Church's bond of unity, they are its head," it was inevitable that the ambitious organizing genius of Rome should answer: "*They?* Why, there can be no common headship in numerous independent monarchs, here and there. That would be intolerable. The head must be one, and who can that one be but the bishop of Rome, who is already accepted by you all as the successor of Peter, the primate of the original Apostles of the Lord Christ? There can be no headship but in *him*." And as to the bishops, they were only realizing practically the logic of their own autocratic position.³

¹"On Modesty," 1.

²Cyprian, Ep. LXXI. (LXXII.), 3.

³The yielding of the High-church theory and practice to the papal, over so large a part of the Church's territory, finds an analogue in the political sphere when, as in the case of Western Medieval Europe, a feudal system

7. THE PAPACY OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

It is unnecessary in this outline study to follow the course of the papacy through the Middle Ages. In fact, there was no essential departure, at least in the strictly ecclesiastical sphere, from the lines of procedure that Leo and his successors had marked out. Not even his ablest and most influential successor for the next six hundred years—namely, Gregory the Great (590-604),¹ father of the medieval papacy, advanced any additional claim. On the contrary, Gregory seemed less inclined than Leo to assert the monarchic idea. He severely rebuked John the Faster, bishop of Constantinople, for styling himself "Universal Patriarch." He calls the claim, whoever may make it, "blasphemous," and declares that "no one has ever before used such a phrase or taken so daring an appellation." As for himself, refusing a supreme lordly title, he professes to be content that he should be called "servant of the servants of God"—a title which successive popes have borne ever since.

For as to the particular title of Universal Patriarch, the pope does not now and never did assume it. He only claims to be Patriarch of the *West*—but Universal Pontiff, Teacher, Judge, and Lord. The most moderate interpretation I have seen of the symbolism of the "triple crown" is, that it denotes supreme ecclesiastical lordship over the diocese of Rome, the patriarchate of the West, and *the whole world*.

Gregory was worthy of his posthumous title. He was "great," not indeed intellectually, but in moral energy and goodness of character—both just and humane, both devout and diligent, pure

is made to give way to a strong monarchical form of centralization. The principle involved in the two cases is the same—namely, the time honored principle that *in unity there is strength*. The fundamental false principle is likewise the same—*divine right*. The possibilities of abuse, and of evil consequence also, are of the same general nature, only in the ecclesiastical sphere even more serious.

¹The only pope comparable to Gregory during this period was Nicolas I. (858-867) an able and energetic administrator, using his office for the promotion of righteousness, "terrible to the evil-doer, whether prince or priest, yet mild to the good and obedient."

in life, missionary in spirit. "The last of the Fathers," he has been called, because of his somewhat voluminous writings on moral and religious themes.

His errors were the errors of an unenlightened age, and the one foul blot on his record may be partly explained, though not excused, by his superstitious devotion to Rome as identical with the cause of Christ on earth. His moral indignation, therefore, at pride of office was doubtless genuine, and not a mere effervescence of jealousy toward the Patriarch of Constantinople. But as to the idea of papal prerogatives, he was at one with his most imperious predecessors, Leo and the rest. He did not hesitate to claim that the see of Rome was divinely appointed to rule over the see of Constantinople, and all the others. "I know not what bishop is not subject to it," he wrote in one of his letters, "if fault is found in him." The pope, he held, inherited the office of Peter, to whom "was committed by our Lord the care of the whole Church." In such a case the refusal to be *called* a universal father to the Church would hardly seem to be a healthful refinement of the spirit of humility. Indeed, Gregory might have consented to be called at the same time both father and servant; for where may a truer example of servanthood be found than in the relation of the father and mother to the child?

Besides, this humble choice of a title for the papacy must not be taken too seriously, because it is quite possible for true greatness, whether in monk or in bishop (and Gregory was both), to be marred by an affectation of humility. There is often so wide a difference between sound and sense, between the look of a thing and the thing itself. It may sound like a humble word when the pope speaks of his throne as the chair of the fisherman, or look like a humble act when he washes the beggars' feet in Holy Week, or seem like a humble subscription when a gentleman signs himself the "obedient servant" of his correspondent; but for an example of real humility one would be instinctively inclined to look elsewhere.¹

¹"Gregory the Great," says a Roman Catholic historian, "desirous of putting an end to such contentions, set an example of humility, and called him-

The simple truth is, that not only John the Faster and Gregory the Great but the bishops of Constantinople and the bishops of Rome, generally speaking, in those formative centuries, illustrate a state of things of which the classic example is that of Pompey and Cæsar. The Constantinopolitans could bear no superior, the Romans no equal.

8. A REVERSAL OF THE ORDER OF HISTORIC FACTS.

The papal claim offers a colossal example of reversal in the order of historic facts. The local congregation, the presbyters, the bishop, the pope—such is the succession in the chief governing officers of the Church, according to the witness of history. The pope preceding all, with bishops and presbyters created by him, and the congregation left with no right or power of government whatever—such is the teaching of Rome. The history is indeed read backwards.

Shall we then denounce the makers of the papacy as evil-minded usurpers, shamelessly denying indisputable facts, deliberately “speaking lies in hypocrisy,” and ruthlessly trampling upon the God-given rights of Christ’s people, on the way to their coveted throne? It would be a narrow and uncharitable judgment.

Aggressors, usurpers they undoubtedly were. The bishops of Rome had no more right to subject the whole world to their official control, by appeals to the Christian conscience and the free use of supernatural terrors, than had the emperors of Rome to reduce the whole world to submission by the less deeply piercing weapon of the sword. But we may not meet these early bishops of the Eternal City, in criticism or argument, with any sweeping denial of sincerity of belief and purpose. If John

self ‘the servant of the servants of God’ (*servus servorum Dei*), which has always been retained by his successors, who in this follow the counsel of Christ: ‘He that is greater among you, let him become servant of all.’” (Alzog, “Universal Church History,” I., 675.) But the counsel of the Master is that the greater should “*become*” servant of all, between which and “*calling himself*” servant of all, the difference is wide indeed. And is there any worse pride than “proud humility?”

Knox or John Wesley, with his unquestioned purity of character, had been placed in the position and surroundings of Leo or Gregory, it is by no means insupposable that he would have attempted similar things in government to those which these unrelenting prelates undertook; and would have made the attempt not for his own exaltation, but for the guardianship of the faith and the advancement of the Church.¹

Ecclesiastic sincerity does not imply even ordinary exegetic gifts. On occasion its interpretations of Scripture may no more set forth the teaching of the passage than the magician's ribbons, flags, and fluttering birds set forth the contents of the bewildered spectator's pocket in which he pretends to find them. It may easily accept legend as history, when legend seems to be promotive of the Church's welfare. It may sometimes be found as the mate of the very audacity of ignorance. In conjunction with fanaticism it is likely to tear and slay as the most cruel of plagues that the world has ever known.

Moreover, sincerity exists, like all other virtues, in different degrees of perfection. It may silently crown a whole life with splendor, or, again, it may be, like Jacob in the prophet's vision, with difficulty able to stand, "because it is small." But it is absolutely essential to moral or Christian manhood, and will not be lightly denied even to extreme errorists by the enlightened and generous mind. Were not John Henry Newman and other leaders of the Tractarian Movement "men of heart sincere?" Throwing up indefensible breastworks of papal authority against the action of that universal and God-given reason which they dreaded as a deadly foe to even theistic faith—were they not following conscience? "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

¹"If I had known St. Francis, I hope I should have had grace enough to become a Franciscan friar and to serve the Lady Poverty. If destiny had put me on the chair of St. Peter, I hope I should have made a good fight against the encroachments of the secular power on the sacred heritage of Christ and the vicar of Christ. But being a twentieth-century Christian, I hope I shall do nothing of the kind." (Rauschenbusch, "Christianity and the Social Crisis," p. 201.)

XIV.

THE BISHOP: THE PAPACY.

THE monarchical papacy succeeded in becoming *Roman* Catholic, but nothing more. Catholic it has never been. For while no one, at least in the earlier centuries, may have cared to dispute the idea of a Roman primacy, there have always been many to ignore or reject the idea of a Roman constitutional supremacy.

We have noted the antagonism of individual bishops and of particular churches to such an idea. But more significant still was the legislation of the General Councils. These Councils, convened not by the pope but by the emperor, knew nothing whatever of a supreme teacher, ruler, and judge of Christendom. As we have seen, they do ascribe to the Roman patriarch a precedence of honor, because of the glory of ancient Rome, and to the patriarch of Constantinople the next honorable place, because of the glory of New Rome; but to neither do they ascribe any right of dictation or jurisdiction. In a word, the general government of the Church sanctioned by the General Councils distinctly excluded monarchy of any sort.

This non-papal conciliar legislation would seem to be conclusive as to the mind of the Church.

I. CONSTANTINOPLE'S POSITION.

It was in harmony with such legislation that papal monarchism was rejected, both early and late, by the Christianity of the East. The see of Rome was left to hear whatever appeals might be brought before it, to exert whatever influence it could throughout Christendom, and to gather the whole West under its governmental authority; and all this it did, but nothing more.

In the East, Constantinople took the place of honor assigned it with reference to the other three patriarchates.

At first, however, there was some opposition on the part of the older patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch to this arrangement. The church in Alexandria was founded, according to tradition, by the evangelist Mark, and Antioch was the first see of the apostle Peter himself; but when and by whom was the church in Constantinople (Byzantium) founded? Alexandria—whose patriarch was called, because of his pretensions and of his real power, “the ecclesiastical Pharaoh”—showed great jealousy, especially during the episcopate of the hot-headed Cyril, of the rising power of the new patriarchal see. But the dissatisfaction subsided; for was not Constantinople the capital of the East, even as Rome was the capital of the West? Moreover, was she not distinctively *Christian* Rome, founded by the Christian Emperor, and unstained from the first by the sin of idolatry? Let her rest without disturbance, cheerfully acknowledged, in her primacy not of constitutional prerogative but of honorable distinction.

Already, therefore, the Catholic Church is virtually broken in twain. Two great ecclesiastical centers have established themselves, one on the Tiber, the other on the Bosphorus—though the formal and final separation awaits the lapse of some centuries. For it is not until July 16, 1054, that the papal legates, standing in the great church of St. Sophia, lay upon its altar, from the hand of the pope, the fearful anathema of Rome: “Let them be Anathema Maranatha, with Simoniacs, Valerians, Arians, Donatists, Nicolaitans, Severians, Pneumatomachi, Manichees, and Nazarenes, and with all heretics; yea, with the devil and his angels. Amen. Amen. Amen.”

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PAPAL CLAIM IN THE WEST.

Papal Rome, like her pagan predecessor, had the spirit and the gift of government.¹ Not of thought, not of original re-

¹We see a significant foretoken of this even in the last decade of the first century. Clement writes a letter from Rome, and in the name of the whole Roman Church—“the Church of God which sojourns at Rome”—to try by good counsel and admonition to quiet a state of disorder which exists in

search. This was the genius of Greece. It was the subtle thinkers of the East who took the lead in theology. They chiefly were influential in framing the early Christian creeds. The imprint that Christian doctrine received from the Latin theologians—as, for instance, from Tertullian and Augustine—was legal rather than spiritual, and practical rather than speculative. Broadly speaking, the Greek mind tended to dwell upon the Divine Nature, the Latin mind upon the nature, salvation, and conduct of man; the Greeks would find God, the Latins would govern men. The Greek, given to the prolonged exercise of reason, meditated; the Roman, putting forth his will, acted. It had been so from the beginning. When Rome flung forth her armies to reduce the world to her will,

The East bowed low beneath the blast
In patient, deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

So the popes that rose into any kind of greatness—most of them do not seem to have risen above mediocrity—showed themselves great as ecclesiastics, organizers, administrators. Through them the doomed Imperial City was rehabilitating itself in the ecclesiastical realm. It was from Greece that Rome had received her philosophy, but it was of herself that she felt the consciousness of power, the instinct of conquest and government. Never before had it taken place, but in one instance it did take place, that a single city, even pagan Rome, should rule the world. And it was now a similar course of conquest and despotic rule, and with a similar consciousness of power, in the sphere of the soul, upon which papal Rome was entering.

Nor was the opportunity lacking.¹ The age of martyrdom had passed; the less glorious age of controversy which followed it

the Church of God in Corinth. His epistle consists chiefly of brotherly exhortation, but not without some tone of authority: "Ye therefore who laid the foundations of this sedition, submit yourselves to the presbyters, so as to repent, bending the knees of the heart." (Ch. 57.)

¹It is not unworthy of remark that, with the removal of the seat of government from Rome to Constantinople, one great negative condition to papal

was also spending its force; the orthodox faith had been formulated and was regnant; and a new world just beginning to be Christianized lay before the chair of Peter. Already the East had begun to stagnate. Its civilizations were decadent; its feeble church-life, slavishly subservient to the civil power, would soon be crushed beneath the iron hoof of Islam. The four patriarchs were there, each with his territory delimited, and no hopeful outlook beyond. But the patriarchs of Rome oversaw the whole West;¹ and the West held the promise of the future. It was yet to be won; rather it was yet to be made. There was virgin soil, wild but rich and deep. There was the "wandering of the nations"—an irrepressible ethnic energy all uncultured and undirected. There were the German, the French, the English races in the making.

The Western Empire was falling to pieces. We must think of it now as the South, and of destruction as coming out of the North. Men had been fain to look upon Rome as the Eternal City. Let her be destroyed, and—there was nothing more. As the ancient geographers made the ocean that lay beyond the line of up-to-date discovery the abode of all manner of doleful and destructive creatures, not to be intruded upon or even thought of, so the minds of men in that olden time, through centuries, refused to contemplate any sequel to the destruction of Rome. Such an event, if a possibility, must mean barbarism, ruin, the

success was furnished. For the pope could carry out his own imperial purposes with a much freer hand when unembarrassed by the throne of the emperor beside his own. "Catholic writers are fond of considering the neglect in which the emperors left the Eternal City and the fall of the Eastern Empire as providential dispensations: they are right. Had the emperors remained in Rome or the popes followed them to Byzance, the papacy had never been what it became. A pope face to face with an autocrat is an anomaly hardly to be conceived." (Leroy-Beaulieu, "The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians," Vol. III., p. 146.)

¹"The Council of Nicæa had indeed defined the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, but later councils which had gone on perfecting the ecclesiastical organization in the East paid little attention to the West, or, so far as they had legislated at all, had inclined to recognize a certain vague supremacy of the bishop of Rome over the entire West." (Allen, "Christian Institutions," p. 146.)

end of the world.¹ True, it was an event that had been predicted in the New Testament. "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great," cried the "second angel" in the Apocalypse.² But if a Christian reader here and there recognized under the name *Babylon* the corrupt and cruel city of Pagan Rome, doubtless he saw in its fall one of the fearful signs that the end of all things was indeed at hand.

Yet when that which was regarded as either impossible or a part of the final catastrophe came to pass, a new and creative Fact appeared. When the spell that Rome had cast upon the minds of men, the hush of reverent awe that attended the mention of her name, even in the fierce forests of the North, was broken up, there stood forth another Rome to command a deeper reverence and to kindle a more controlling terror in the soul. In the place of the city of the Cæsars rose the City of God. Just outside the walls of Rome, Attila the Hun, leading his innumerable horde of savages, greedy and relentless as the grave, met Leo the Churchman—and turned away. There was no emperor worthy of the name to meet—a few years, and there was not even a nominal emperor. The bishop whom he did meet was the real ruler of Rome, and the prototype of the real rulers, through many generations, of the Western world. If the papacy be called "Rome's ghost since her decease," it must be acknowledged as a ghost more powerful and more long-lived than the original flesh-and-blood Rome herself. Or if, as again it has been said, "Rome no longer held the world by arms, but by men's imaginations," it was a grip upon their imaginations more effective by far than the stroke of the sword that drank their blood.

The barbarians were religious. They cherished the Northern superstitions, and were not irresponsive to signs and assertions of the supernatural. Some of them had already been converted to the Arian form of Christianity. When, therefore, they were everywhere confronted by the Church, with its stately ceremonial, its compact hierarchy, its open door, its tender yet awful teach-

¹Bryce, "The Holy Roman Empire," pp. 21, 22.

²Rev. xiv. 8.

ings, its supernatural authority, the ancient story was retold of the victor yielding himself up to the moral power of his prostrate foe. Greece in letters, and despised little Judæa in religion, had already subdued their Roman conquerors; and now Rome, Christianized, is in her turn to triumph over the triumphant barbarians.

3. SHALL THE MEDIEVAL PAPACY BE APPROVED?

Here, as in connection with every great institution or movement of Christianity, is felt the pressure of the strictly Christian, as distinguished from the ecclesiastical, question: Is it in accord with the mind of Christ? Shall we say—quoting sundry thinkers who themselves are utter disbelievers in the grounds of the papal claim—that at least from Gregory the Great to Gregory the Seventh the papacy formed a part of God's great scheme for the governing of the world; that it "was necessary for the training of the Romanic and Germanic nations of the Middle Ages, but has virtually outlived itself;" that the providential function of the Middle Ages was to "create an Imperial Church which should bridle and tame the pioneer centuries of modernity;" that something like "this was the course which the world, in its inner evolution, had to take?"

It is of course not a question of the approval of the briberies, finesse, and frauds that have been practiced by the promoters of papal authority. These are confessedly evil—only evil in any form of Christianity, and especially so in that which claims to be not only preëminently holy but the one holy and only Church of Christ on earth. Nobody, for example, would now justify the Roman canonists' gross interpolations, for the papacy's sake, in Cyprian's treatise "On the Unity of the Church;" nor the publication of the shameless forgery of "The Donation of Constantine;" nor the attributing of the Sardican canons to the Council of Nice; nor the use of the Pseudo-Isadorian Decretals, that most successful of all historic forgeries, which for six hundred years served so well the pope's purpose to concentrate in himself all episcopal power. Together with the frauds, the numerous vices

and crimes, the utter apostasy and shamelessness, in which the papacy has been implicated can expect nothing but condemnation.¹ Only let all the Christian churches, as well as all the Christians, remember the Master's words and try to make their true application: "Judge not, that ye be not judged;" "Beware of false prophets."

Nor is it a question of the acceptance or the rejection of the peculiar papal claims. For if these be true, and so the bishop of Rome indeed the vicegerent of Christ on earth, to whom all authority has been committed, in disobedience to whom is eternal condemnation, then this supremacy of Rome must be accepted as a part of God's plan of governing the world not only in the Middle Ages but in all ages. And, on the other hand, if these claims have no foundation in truth, then this absolute Roman supremacy is contrary to the will and purpose of Christ, and outside the Divine plan. Only the true can claim as its author the God of truth.

Nor yet again is it a question as to whether the papacy, supposed to be an evil thing in itself, or at best a colossal and tragic blunder, was overruled for the effecting of certain great and good results. For that which will not be divinely ruled may still be divinely overruled. That God should turn the intended curse of the Moabites against Israel into a blessing;² that he should

¹A scholarly Roman Catholic historical writer is constrained to say: "During that long period of a century and a half [882-1046] there is hardly one, perhaps not one Pope, who was even an ordinarily good bishop. It is a long story of simoniacal elections, murder, and violence of every kind, together with shameless lust." (Fortescue, "The Orthodox Eastern Church," pp. 172, 173.) "Horrible people" is the author's name for a long line of popes.

"The papacy itself lost all independence and dignity, and became the prey of avarice, violence, and intrigue, a veritable synagogue of Satan. It was dragged through the quagmire of the darkest crimes, and would have perished in utter disgrace had not Providence saved it for better times. Pope followed pope in rapid succession, and most of them ended their career in deposition, prison, and murder." (Schaff, "History of the Christian Church," Vol. IV., p. 283.) Indeed, of this long period of utter depravity and criminality, there can be no shadow of doubt.

²Num. xxiii. 23, 24.

use the Assyrians, cruelest of nations, as a scourge for his elect people, and the sword of Cyrus as their deliverance;¹ that the wicked conquests of Alexander should be made the occasion for the diffusion of the Greek language over the world as a preparation for Christian literature and preaching; that the unification of countries and nations under the Roman Empire should make possible the missionary labors and successes of the Apostles and others, by which the Church was founded among Jews and Gentiles; that Cæsar's bloody conquest of Gaul should have wrought eventually for the betterment of the land; that the Norman Conquest, with all its cruelty and oppression and all its evil consequences, should have served as an agency in English civilization; that American slavery should issue in the civilizing and Christianizing of millions of the world's most benighted inhabitants; that this or that American war, whether righteous or unrighteous, should have resulted well, in certain respects, for the world's progress—that such things may be true, while the agents in all these movements, from the Assyrian to the American, may have been actuated by the greed of gain or the lust of dominion, working an evil work and suffering the punishment that was meet;—all this is a commonplace in the Christian view of history. And the Roman ecclesiastic rule might easily be supposed to be of a kind with these other historic facts. But neither does this touch the point now under consideration.

Or, on the other hand, we might be asked to imagine what would have been the result if the medieval papacy had had its own way up to the present time. What would have been the condition of modern civilization and religion—of our modern world? The ignorance, the arrest of progress, the superstition, the poverty, the unhealthfulness, the political absolutism, the slavery of conscience, the abjectness of intellect must indeed have been appalling. But this, too, is irrelevant to our question.

The question is whether, not the papacy, either as it was or as it is, but a simple, strong, authoritative headship of the Church, was needed for the extension of the kingdom of God during the

¹Isa. xlv. 28; xlv. 1-7.

long and dark transitional period of European civilization. If it was needed, then we may well believe it to have been included in the Divine purpose.

The laws of historic development have to be taken into consideration. Familiar enough is the proverb, the good is the enemy of the best; but may not the best, on the other hand, be the enemy of the good—namely, through trying to force the ideally perfect upon people incapable of appreciating or using it? The ideally perfect life is for a man to direct and govern himself—to live, as his body does, from within. But so long as the man is a child it is best that he should be, to a very large extent, directed and governed from without. So with the childhood of an age. Incapable of democratic self-government, it may find *its* best in some form of strong monarchical control. Undoubtedly "the best" is no less a comparative than a superlative idea.¹

Let us, then, imagine the Roman bishop's office stripped of every false belief or pretension, and exalted not simply to some such primacy in the Church of the West as the early centuries were disposed to sanction, but to a distinctly stronger authority: might it not reasonably and righteously have presented itself to the Middle Ages as their very best form of church government?"

¹"That form of church government is best which in any given age and society works best, and this may well be concentrated personal authority in one set of circumstances, and democratic representative administration in another. Each has its advantages and its disadvantages." (Hyde, "From Epicurus to Christ," p. 244.)

"To Western Christianity was absolutely necessary a center, standing alone, strong in traditionary reverence, and in acknowledged claims to supremacy. . . . Providence might have ordained otherwise, but it is impossible for man to imagine by what other organizing or consolidating force the commonwealth of the Western nations could have grown up to a discordant, indeed, and conflicting league, but still to a league, . . . to issue in the noblest, highest, most intellectual form of civilization known to man." (Milman, "Latin Christianity," Bk. III., ch. vii., pp. 42, 43.)

"Regarded merely as the efflorescence of the episcopate, the ecclesiastical center of Western Christendom, it must be admitted that there is nothing in the idea of the papacy positively anti-Christian. If it be not anti-Christian for the faithful of a diocese to gather themselves round a bishop, or for the bishops of a province to evolve out of their body a metropolitan center, no more was it anti-Christian for the episcopate of an empire, or of

May I venture to suggest a modern illustration? The distinguishing religious movement of England in the eighteenth century was the Evangelical Revival. Its leader, whose administrative gifts have rarely been equaled, enrolled his followers in societies under his own personal control. For half a century, even unto the day of his death, when these societies numbered over a hundred and thirty thousand members, he governed them, save for a few years in America, with an unshared authority. To God alone would he hold himself responsible. Not that he had chosen to be intrusted with so great power. "It came upon me unawares," so he solemnly declared. "I always did and do now bear it as my burden—the burden which God lays upon me—and therefore I dare not yet lay it down." This Wesleyan authority, some measure of which has been transmitted through Episcopal Methodism to our own time, is now largely recognized as subversive of no Christian principle, and as grounded in voluntary mutual self-renunciation for the sake of unity, edification, and aggressive force. And its works are its commendation.

Now may not something like that which took place amid many limitations in a modern instance have taken place, a thousand years before, in the far wider field which opened westward for the bishops of Rome? There was need of it. For the West of the Middle Ages there was apparent fitness in the centralization of administrative authority—fitness not only in centralizing and personalizing it, but in clothing it with extraordinary power. These medieval men were not able to think for themselves, in either politics or religion. They were not ready for self-government. They had neither the sense of personal responsibility nor the social conscience which are necessary to a true and safe democracy. Let them be taught and quickened and built up into intellectual and moral manhood. But meantime they must submit to a guiding and governing authority that might afterwards prove far more an intrusion and injustice than a necessity.

the whole Church, to develop from itself a living center of unity, which should have the effect of consolidating and binding together the whole body." (Litton, "The Church of Christ," pp. 325, 326.)

Was not, then, that turbulent time, enshrining nevertheless so splendid a promise, the opportunity for a united and progressive church under a single personal leadership? Let such a leadership be unspoiled by the debasement of authority into despotism, let it be enlightened and evangelic, yet firm, compact, powerful to subdue the awakening minds of men into reverence for divine ordinances and to embody in organic form the kingdom of heaven, let it be a pure type of Christianity organized—so runs the dream of what might have been.¹

But it was not so. The men of that day being such as they were—only partly escaped from the immemorial superstitions of paganism and the overpowering idea of imperialism, accustomed to worship Rome in the person of the Emperor—the faith of the Son of Man was corrupted, authority overstrained, apostolic oversight perverted into hieratic and papal absolutism. Only the truth that remained shall we dare to call divine. The watch-care, the principle of authority and obedience, the co-operation, the organized aggressiveness, the external unity—these, it is not hard to believe, were of God's ordering. And the great good that was done—in the arrest of barbarism, in the administration of justice, in saving distant churches like the Anglo-Saxon from lapsing into deepest ignorance and debasement, in the enforcement of an authority under whose protection nations might arise, in the inculcation of various Christian truths—it would be the very perverseness of folly to deny. Separated in

¹Still it might not unreasonably be imagined that even in the Middle Ages a less centralized and personal form of government would, on the whole, have accomplished greater good—for example, that of the Cyprianic episcopacy, or the conciliar system as illustrated in Presbyterianism. "If left to itself, the genius of Christianity might have evolved an organization which, starting from the unit of the congregational meeting, and rising through a series of synods with widening areas of jurisdiction, might have culminated in a really representative ecumenical council, or synod, which would have given a visible unity of organization to the whole Christian Church, and at the same time would have preserved its primitive democratic organization." (Lindsay, "Church and Ministry," p. 334.)

One may even conceive of the successful operation of the original congregational church government from the beginning, under all circumstances, until now. (Cf. Heermance, "Democracy in the Church," pp. 36 ff.)

thought from the enormous evils by which it was embarrassed, the good stands forth as a witness to the purpose of God in the life of the ages out of which our own was born.

4. TWO ADDITIONAL STAGES OF PAPAL DEVELOPMENT.

Recurring now to the story of the papacy, we shall have to mark two more stages of development.

The first is well represented by the pontificate of Gregory VII. (1073-85), better known as Hildebrand, who asserted, as one of his official prerogatives, the power to govern the nations in the interest of the Church. The pope was overlord, kings and emperors his vassals. All kings must take or lay aside their crowns, and all peoples pay allegiance to their sovereigns, or refuse it, at his will.

Was Hildebrand wholly wrong in this assertion? Assuming the papal idea to be true, he was wholly right. For, according to this idea, the Divine plan for the government of the world was that of a theocracy, with the bishop of Rome enthroned as the one universal and absolute ruler. The State, therefore, which was purely secular, must exercise no authority over the Church, but, on the contrary, must yield to the Church's authority, which was that of the theocracy, the veritable kingdom of God. That bishops, for example, should be in any wise dependent on the State for their appointment to office was not to be tolerated (which was true enough). Did the Emperor or the King of England or any other civil ruler insist on having a determinative voice in episcopal appointments? He thereby lost his right to reign, and the pope must remove him from the throne and appoint another in his place (which was by no means true). This, no doubt, is still the papal idea of the relation of Church and State, and Hildebrand was simply endeavoring, with an inflexible purpose, to give it effective form. Christian kings wear their crowns only by the grace of the Holy Father, and must conduct their kingdoms as his dear and obedient sons.

It was such a voice as had never been heard in the world before. Imperial Rome gained the obedience of the nations, so far as she might be able to subjugate them with the sword, ruling

by physical force; papal Rome commanded their obedience as a God-given ordinance, to disobey which was rebellion against the Most High. Was it but an idle boast? At any rate, it left the recalcitrant monarch well-nigh helpless. What could he do, with the churches of his kingdom closed, sacraments forbidden, the dead refused burial in consecrated ground, and *his subjects freed from their oath of allegiance*, by a supernatural Authority beside which his own was little more than child's play?"

The other stage of development concerns the question of doctrinal infallibility. Is the pope an infallible teacher? The Church has always been believed by Romanists—as it is now generally believed perhaps by High Anglicans²—to be infallible. But there must needs be some organ through which the absolutely true teaching is expressed. It were vain to speak of a general infallible authority in the Church without informing the inquirer when and where its articulate voice may be heard. What, then, is the infallible Church's organ of expression? Perhaps the General Council, perhaps the pope, perhaps the General Council and the pope acting conjointly—who can tell? There were three different opinions, as just indicated, on the subject.

But the opinion that for infallible teaching we must look to the pope—though quite contrary to the enactments of the Council of Constance (1414)³ and of some lesser councils—showed

²It may help toward realizing the situation to remember that "the great body of Christians in the West" in that day "feared the thunders of the Lateran as those of heaven; and were no more capable of sound discrimination as to the limits, grounds, and nature of the authority than as to the causes of the destructive fire from the clouds. Their general belief in the judgment to come was not more deeply rooted than in the right of the clergy, more especially the head of the clergy, to anticipate, to declare, or to ratify their doom." (Milman, "Latin Christianity," Bk. VII., ch. i., p. 363.)

³Gore, "Roman Catholic Claims," pp. 37, 38, 73, 74.

⁴The significance of the Council of Constance lies in its assertion of the supreme authority of the General Council. Refusing to take the mind of Christ in the Scriptures as the ultimate rule of faith, unresponsive to the new life of thought and independent activity that was wakening in the world, deaf to the voices of the prophets whom God was raising up, this Council sent John Hus, the brave and gentle Christian preacher, to the flames. But it also deposed John XXIII., the immoral pope.

certain obvious advantages. For one thing, it seemed a long time to wait, from one General Council to another, in order to get an absolutely true definition in doctrine or morals.¹ And was not the pope at any rate superior to the Council? was not he, and no body of bishops, however venerable, the Rock upon which the Church was founded? And is it not fitting that the absolute ruler should also be the absolute teacher? Such considerations favored the attributing of this power to the see of Rome.

As a matter of fact, the see of Rome had been exercising it already. For it was in 1854, for example, that Pius IX., without convoking a council, set forth, on his own authority, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception—which had been rejected by such men as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, the chief theologians of the fifth and the thirteenth century—and demanded, on pain of the Church's anathema, that it be thenceforth universally accepted. In the decreeing of this new article of faith, then, we may recognize an effective preparation for the enactment of the decree of papal infallibility, which was soon to be accomplished under the management and influence of this same energetic pontiff.

True, the proposal that the Chair of Peter, apart altogether from the General Council or any other authority, should be declared infallible, was strongly resisted by bishops, scholars, writers, and others.² In England and Ireland especially it seems to

¹Not, however, that frequent *ex cathedra* definitions in doctrine or morals for the whole Church are to be had even from an infallible pope. There has been none, I think, since the session of the Council which defined and declared his infallibility. "What is the advantage of a rapid-firing gun," it has been asked, "if one never fires it?"

²To resist it now means excommunication. Yet how, in the light of historic knowledge, can it be accepted? Let a Modernist tell:

"Your Eminence: a boy in his teens, as ignorant as he was morally vicious, was once elected to be the Vicar of Christ. He had not at the moment of his election the most rudimentary knowledge of his catechism. You maintain that the great Christian tradition and deposit of the faith was suddenly interfused into that empty, godless little brain; that he had only to look within himself in order to instruct the whole episcopate as to the true sense of revelation. Plainly your Church-theory is tenable only on the supposition of a continual miracle as wonderful as the conversion of

have gained very little foothold. Still it persisted and gathered strength. It was the simplest and most logical outcome of the situation. Above all, the Curia willed it and worked for its realization. So when the time had grown ripe for defining the Roman faith on this question, Pope Pius convoked the Vatican Council, which, on the 18th of July, 1870, enacted the canon of papal infallibility. Not declaring the Roman Pontiff incapable of error in his personal opinions, it does declare him incapable of error in defining a doctrine concerning faith or morals for the whole Church.

Thus the center of government was now asserted to be, and for all papists made to be, the center of teaching. Christian unity was completely defined. The centralizing idea which for long years had wrought with irregular but often renewed energy had now finished its task triumphantly. The General Council lay prostrate at the foot of the papal throne. The official word of one man became the universal law, from which there was absolutely no appeal.

True enough, this one man's infallibility consists, as it has been pertinently said, in "his inability to confess that either he or his predecessors erred even where their errors are most manifest." But, nevertheless, it is now officially defined as historic, genuine, divine; and accordingly the Church as lawmaker, administrator, judge, and teacher, is the Pope.

Shall we again be reminded that the papal dream of unity has failed of fulfillment? In the attempt to realize it the see of Rome repelled the Eastern Church till the ecclesiastical separation of East and West became irreparable. Later, in the Protestant Reformation, it hopelessly lost the strongest, most enlightened, and most progressive nations of the world. In some lands, indeed, it crushed the rising dissent—and in torture-chambers so

water into wine, and which would give us a right to look for a uniform and superhuman wisdom in the supreme government of the Church, for which there is not a vestige of historic evidence." (Tyrrell, "Medievalism: A Reply to Cardinal Mercier," pp. 59, 60.)

terrible that in comparison the Imperial persecutions of the early Christians were moderate and merciful. But in others the ancient witness was repeated of men and women invincible in faith and courage,

“Who wrapped the robe of flame around them, thanking God,”

and multiplied the number of their fellow-believers. And where this Roman unity, enforced with both natural and supernatural terrors, seemed most successful, there the spiritual failure has of necessity shown the deepest. For its success was gained at the expense of Christian truth and the liberty of the sons of God.

Again, what was the territorial extent of Rome's ecclesiastic unity at the height of her power? It was the Southern and Western Europe of the Middle Ages—a plain and easily manageable field compared with the Christian world of the twentieth century.¹ What was the intellectual condition of the people united under the absolutism of her government? They were potentially active-minded, but as yet of the night and of darkness—asleep in ignorance, the prey of gross intimidating superstitions, without science, without historic knowledge or criticism, without initiative, without independence of thought. True, in that medieval time “the brain drank in the ecclesiastical belief as the lungs breathed the air;” but it was an unenlightened brain. It was destitute both of the science which was yet to be and—far worse deprivation—of the New Testament which had been hidden securely away.

But alike through successes and failures, in the “ages of faith” and in the ages of enlightenment, the papal policy, much modified from time to time in administration, remains essentially the same. At all hazards unity of organization, under one monarchical head, has been maintained. This unlawful empire of the soul stands to-day a marvel of organic strength and completeness. While many thousands of those whom it counts in its membership are indifferent or unbelieving, other thousands are ready to

¹Fairbairn, “Catholicism, Roman and Anglican,” p. 279.

go to the ends of the earth, braving every hardship and danger, in its service. Giant Pope, indeed, as Bunyan described him over two hundred years ago, may have “grown so crazy and stiff in his joints that he can do little more than sit in his cave’s mouth” in impotent anger—so far as his relations to heretical Christians are concerned. Yet within his own immense constituency he is still the recipient of great reverence and obedience.

Meantime it remains, and doubtless it will remain when the heavens shall have passed away, that not without freedom can spiritual unity be achieved, and not without the knowledge of the truth can the prison walls of the soul be broken down.

XV.

UNITY: THE COUNCIL.

THE conciliar idea may lay claim to universality. People accept it as a matter of course, without ever inquiring whether there was a time when it was strange or unknown. So long as men are what they are, imperfect in wisdom and inclined to open their minds to one another, it is inevitable that they should assemble, formally or informally, for discussion and conference. And so long as they have to live in divers trying social relations—such, for instance, as that of government—it is inevitable that beliefs, usages, and laws should be proposed for consideration and action at their meetings. The same idea is illustrated whenever one man asks advice of another. It appears in numberless everyday forms. Any two or three persons met together, though it be but casually on the street, talking over some matter of common interest, and trying to reach a unanimous decision, illustrate the essential principle of the Roman Senate, the Jewish Sanhedrin, the Council of Nice, the Second Hague Conference, or the International Court of Arbitration—a dewdrop showing pictures of the sky.

“Where there is no counsel purposes are disappointed:
But in the multitude of counselors they are established.”

Now in both Church and State the council, like the chief officer of government—the bishop, or president, or monarch—stands committed to the principle of unity. However numerous or discordant the voices with which it speaks within its own doors, the aim is to speak finally and out of doors with a single voice, so as to unify as well as to guide or govern the people in whose behalf it acts. Whether it be an advisory or an authoritative body, this is true. If advisory, it is intended that all shall follow its advice; if authoritative, that all shall keep its laws. Therefore, whatever other function it may perform, a council cannot be con-

ceived otherwise than as a power that makes for order, peace, unity.

I. COUNCILS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In the first days of Christian organization, when differences of sentiment and usage, or even dissensions, arose, threatening the peace of a congregation, there was one great and peculiar bond of unity available—namely, the determinative word of an Apostle. An instructive example is given in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. When the Christian believers in Corinth were divided on certain exciting points of morals and church order, they wrote to their inspired founder and teacher concerning these matters. The propriety of partaking, either at one's own table or at a banquet to which one had been invited by a pagan friend, of meats that had been offered in sacrifice to idols, was such a question. And here we know how luminous and complete was the apostolic answer.¹

But the occasions of disputings, sometimes petty and sometimes full of significance, are innumerable in the Church—as in the home or the neighborhood or in any association. To deal with each separately and distinctly were impossible. Therefore, the Apostle, penetrating to the heart of the whole matter, would judge them all, from first to last, in the light of the newly revealed law of Christlike love. "If meat make my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore." "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?" "If there is any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, . . . fulfill ye my joy that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." That was Paul's universally applicable answer.

The chief thing, then, is to recognize practically the center of mind, love, life in the ever-living Christ. Under the light of that vision of unity many a disorderly battle in the dark, with all its fateful effects, would be avoided.

But there is also a notable instance in the New Testament of

¹1 Cor. viii.

an effort to maintain the imperiled unity of a congregation by convoking a council. Even in this case, however, the Apostles were to be members of the body; and doubtless it was to them chiefly that the appeal for the peace-giving decision was made. Shall we recall the occasion? The newly-formed Jewish-Christian church in Antioch was unable to decide as to the conditions on which Gentiles should be received into its communion. It was no mere local moot point to be settled. It was a question of vital and far-reaching significance. Whether the little church in Antioch realized it or not, the future of Christianity depended largely upon the answer that might be given to such questions.

The Church of the Old Testament, we must remember, was racial. It was composed of the children of Abraham, and of any others, never a great number, who might receive the sign of the covenant which God had made with the first Hebrew father. Should the Church of the New Covenant likewise be racial, or was it the Divine will that it should be in the simplest and truest sense universal? Jewish particularism or evangelic universalism? That was the question; and the Antiochian Christians felt their incompetence to settle it alone. They sent it, accordingly, by the mouth of Saul, Barnabas, and other messengers, to the Apostles and the elders of the church in Jerusalem, for determination.

However, not only these but also the non-official members of the church seem to have attended the meeting and to have approved its action. For the messengers from Antioch were received by "the church" as well as by "the Apostles and the elders;" and the messengers sent from Jerusalem, at the close of the conference, to convey its decision, were chosen by the Apostles and elders "with the whole church."¹

This conference has sometimes been called, though with no commendable accuracy of language, the First General Council. It was not general at all, unless the word be here used in a peculiar sense. For it was not a council of different churches

¹Acts xv. 1-29.

meeting in the person of their representatives to consider matters of common interest and importance, but the council of a single church, called at the request and on the behalf of another. And although it could claim the illumination of the Holy Spirit, yet the prohibitions that made up its decision—"that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication"—were not as a whole generally applicable. They were intended in their entirety to meet certain conditions only; for, as we know, one of them—that, namely, of abstention from things sacrificed to idols—was not by the apostle Paul laid upon the consciences of the Corinthian Christians.¹

On the other hand, it may be asserted with perfect truth that this was no ordinary congregational council called to decide an economic question for a sister congregation. It was extraordinary, and has had no successor. Because side by side with the elders of this mother church in Jerusalem sat the Apostles of our Lord. This gave an inimitable, and in a certain sense an ecumenical, character to the body and its proceedings; for even though we should suppose that the Apostles took their seats in such an assembly as elders,² we cannot believe that here or elsewhere they could lay aside their apostolic wisdom and mission. It must still have been the *Apostles* that sat as elders. Their voice must always be that of the chosen Twelve, taught and trained by the Son of Man, baptized with his Spirit of truth, and sent forth as his inspired teachers to all the world.

Moreover, the decrees of this council of "the Apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem" were of such general importance and authority as to be delivered by Paul and Silas, on their missionary journey, to the churches in the cities of Asia Minor.³

The fact of practical moment is that the council in Jerusalem, while not classifiable with any of the numberless subsequent church courts and conferences, is a worthy model for them all. Brotherliness, Christian expediency, fidelity to the truth, conjoined with a sensible and sympathetic consideration of the cir-

¹1 Cor. viii. 1-8.

²1 Pet. v. 1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1.

³Acts xvi. 4.

cumstances to which they must be applied—such were its conspicuous notes. And the effect of its action in the city of Antioch was joy and upbuilding, in the place of a threatening spirit of dissension and schism.

As might have been expected, we also find various references in the New Testament to the local council, or business meeting of the congregation. Such a meeting is referred to in the words of our Lord, when he says, "Tell it to the church;" in the story of the election of Matthias to the apostleship in the Upper Room;¹ and even in such a proposal as that of Paul to the Corinthians with respect to the conveyance of their contributions to the needy Christians in Jerusalem—"whomsoever *ye shall approve* by letters, them will I send."² In a word, wherever a board of elders might sit in consultation, or a meeting of all the brethren be held for deliberation on any matter, there was the conciliar principle in practical Christian expression.

2. EARLY INTER-CONGREGATIONAL COUNCILS.

A good many years elapsed, however, before different congregations began to unite in a single deliberative assembly composed of representatives of each, and thus to form an inter-congregational council. At first a council of this kind included very few congregations, and seems to have been marked by no very formal method of procedure. Afterwards it represented a wider territory, and was somewhat more numerously attended. Then, ere long, appeared the provincial, and a century later the General, or Ecumenical, Council. And it is this course of organific development—the gradual lengthening of the conciliar bond of Christian unity—that we have now for a little while to follow.

Leaving out of view, then, the council in Jerusalem, as an extraordinary assembly,

(1) There is, as just said, the local, or congregational, council.

(2) Then, passing on from the New Testament age, we meet with the case of a congregation, in some emergency or time of

¹Acts i. 15-26.

²1 Cor. xvi. 3.

special need, asking that delegates from sister congregations come to its help with advice or other service.

Such a case may be illustrated by the Occasional Councils of the Congregational churches of our own day. Here, when a church desires the ordination or the installation of a minister, or feels its need of advice concerning such a matter as internal dissensions or as accusation made against its pastor, it requests pastors and delegates from certain neighboring churches to assist it by ordaining or installing the chosen minister, or by conferring with it on the matter under consideration and giving suitable counsel.¹

Of this simplest form of the intercongregational council, some indications may be seen in the second century. By the middle of this century it was in some localities the rule, as we have already learned in another connection, that in case of a vacancy in the pastorate of a church consisting of fewer than twelve families, the church should call for three representatives of sister congregations to unite with it in a congregational meeting for the election of a pastor.² Indeed, in the third century it became a custom that all congregations, the strong as well as the feeble, should adopt a similar course; and in the first quarter of the fourth century it appears not simply as a custom but as a universal law. For what else was the canon of the Council of Nice respecting the ordination of bishops?³

Of like character probably—one congregation calling another to its assistance—were some of the earlier councils for the suppression of Montanism. Some of these, in fact, seem to have been simply incidental meetings between one congregation and certain members of another. At least an instance is recorded of a presbyter who, together with a fellow-presbyter, being in Ancyra, a chief city of Galatia, and finding the Christians there

¹See p. 384.

²Sources of Apostolic Canons (E. T.), p. 8.

³"It is by all means proper that a bishop should be appointed by all the bishops in the province; but should this be difficult, either on account of urgent necessity or because of distance, three at least should meet together and the suffrages of the absent [bishops] also being given and communicated in writing, then the ordination shall take place." (Can. iv.)

much agitated over this "novelty" of Montanism, discussed the question before them many days, so that "the church rejoiced and was strengthened in the truth;" and the two presbyters were requested by "the presbyters of the place" to write a record of what had been said and to leave it with the church.¹ What then have we here? A Christian congregation, two presbyters from another congregation "happening" to be with them, discussions day after day on vital points of doctrine and discipline, a record of the visiting presbyters' teachings and injunctions requested—here, in its crudest germinal form, was an inter-congregational conference, synod, council.

(3) Next we notice the gathering of representatives from a region of country, larger or smaller in extent—such, in some instances, as might afterwards constitute the territory of a whole patriarchate—to deliberate upon some perplexing question of general concernment. Here appear the more prominent councils that were convened in the latter part of the second century with reference, as in the case of those held earlier and less frequently, to the spread of Montanism. And, in truth, they were apparently much needed. It was under stress of no little excitement and danger that they met.²

To protect the Church, then, against the multiplying excesses of Montanism, these Christian synods were called together.³ As to the character of their members, or the particular cities in which they were held, no record remains. In all probability they were neither formally constituted nor numerous attended.

There was another question that seriously disturbed the peace of the early Church, which occasioned the calling of similar though much larger councils. It was a question of ritual observance: Shall the Christian Passover (or Easter festival, as it was infelicitously named by our English forefathers) be cele-

¹Eusebius, H. E., V. xvi. 4.

²See pp. 547, 548.

³"For the faithful in Asia met often in many places throughout Asia to consider this matter, and examined the novel utterances and pronounced them profane, and rejected the heresy; and thus these persons were expelled from the Church and debarred from the communion." (Eusebius, H. E., V. xvi. 10.)

brated on the day of the Jewish Passover, the fourteenth of the month Nisan, no matter on what day of the week this date may fall? or shall the death of Jesus always be celebrated on a Friday, the day of the week on which it occurred, and his resurrection on the following Sunday?

In the churches of Asia it was customary to observe the day of the Jewish Passover. On the fourteenth of Nisan, accordingly, they kept a fast, and in the evening partook of a love feast and the Lord's Supper in commemoration of the redemptive Sacrifice. That was their Christian Passover. In this custom the emphasis was placed upon the sacrificial death of Christ. But outside Asia Minor the churches had chosen to celebrate the death of Christ on a Friday, with a fast that was kept till the following Sunday, when it was followed by the festal rejoicing appropriate to the day of the Resurrection. Here the emphasis was placed not upon the crucifixion, but upon the fact that the Crucified One had risen triumphantly from the dead.¹

It was not a vital question. Irenæus, the peacemaker, was right in his appeal to the contending parties: "Whence these schisms? We keep the feasts, but in the leaven of malice by tearing the Church of God, and observing what is outward in order to reject what is better, faith and charity." Nevertheless the proper ritual observance of the supreme facts of the Christian revelation was involved in the controversy; and through the difference of practice that prevailed among the churches, one Christian community might be fasting and lamenting at the Cross while another was singing hymns of triumphant joy over the Saviour's conquest of death. It did not seem fitting that such contrary scenes should be permitted to occur in the Catholic Church.

But how might the disorder be rectified? The whole Christian world was agitated by the controversy; and for its settlement there were held, in Palestine, Ephesus, Gaul, Rome, Corinth, and

¹"The gist of the paschal controversy was whether the Jewish paschal day (be it a Friday or not), or the Christian Sunday, should control the idea and time of the entire festival." (Schaff, "Church History," Vol. II., 212.)

other places, councils of the churches¹—though with no great success.

In Greece, early in the third century, similar councils were held with frequency if not with regularity.²

(4) More regularly held but relatively narrow, of course, in their range of representation and influence, were the diocesan councils. These were convened by the ordinary bishop, for consultation with the clergy of his episcopal district, or diocese.

(5) What of the provincial councils? These came naturally and reasonably, together with the office of provincial, or metropolitan, bishop.

In the third century the ecclesiastical leader most prominent in the convening of such synods was Cyprian of Carthage; and a prominent subject of discussion was that of rebaptism: Shall a person who was baptized by a heretic, though according to the regular Trinitarian formula, and is now seeking admission into the Catholic Church, be received without rebaptism? On the affirmative side of the question stood Rome; on the negative side, Carthage. And the finally prevalent party was Rome.

3. THESE PROVINCIAL COUNCILS WERE REPRESENTATIVE BODIES.

Let it be noted that during the first century and a half of their history the post-apostolic councils seem to have been composed chiefly of bishops. But together with the bishops there sat, certainly in some cases, presbyters, deacons, and chosen laymen.³

¹Hefele, "History of the Christian Councils," Bk. I., sec. 2.

²"Besides, throughout the provinces of Greece, there are held in definite localities those councils gathered out of the universal churches, by whose means not only all the deeper questions are handled for the common benefit, but the actual representation of the whole Christian name is celebrated with great veneration." (Tertullian, "On Fasting," 13.)

³"Pastors [bishops] of the churches from all directions made haste to assemble at Antioch, as against a despoiler of the flock of Christ. Of these the most eminent were Firmilianus, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, the brothers Gregory. . . . If any should count them up, he could not fail to note a great many others, besides presbyters and deacons, who were at that time assembled for the same cause in the above-mentioned city." (Eusebius, H. E., VII., xxvii., xxviii.)

"The Acts [of the Council of Elvira, much more than an ordinary pro-

Besides, their sessions were held apparently in the presence of any church members who might choose to attend. They were representative bodies, not yet withdrawn in hierarchic separation from the people, but speaking the mind of the Church and acting in its name.

As to influence, they were doubtless powerful. As to authority, strictly speaking, they exercised none. Their decisions, though often carrying, as may be supposed, a determinative moral weight, were not mandatory but advisory only. No coercive measures were employed to secure obedience.¹ In fact, according to the Cyprianic doctrine, it could not be done; inasmuch as every bishop, even the least competent local pastor, with the smallest congregation of them all, was free from ecclesiastical authority (as free, for example, as a modern Congregational or Baptist church) and answerable only to the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

As a matter of fact, in the absence of any formal enactment of interchurch law during these early centuries, the churches were governed to a large extent by the unwritten law of Custom.

Let us think of this for a moment. Already in the Apostolic Epistles we find references to the custom of the churches generally as an influential consideration in determining the practice of any particular church: "But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."² So in the post-apostolic age. Accordingly the question before the councils was: What have the Christian congregations generally believed? what rites of worship have they observed? what

vincial council and held as late as the year 305] also mention twenty-four priests, and say that they were seated at the Synod like the bishops, while the deacons and *laity* stood up." (Hefele, "History of the Christian Councils," Bk. I., p. 132.)

¹"The result of the deliberations of such a conference was expressed sometimes in a resolution, sometimes in a letter addressed to other churches. It was the rule for such letters to be received with respect; for the sense of brotherhood was strong and the causes of alienation were few. But so far from such letters having any binding force on other churches, not even the resolutions of a conference were binding on a dissentient minority of its members." (Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," pp. 170, 171.)

²1 Cor. xi. 16.

forms of discipline have they followed? That is the point on which judgment was to be pronounced. How has it been heretofore? rather than, How shall *we* make it to be?¹

A good illustration may be seen in the history of the New Testament Canon. Who selected the twenty-seven writings that should thenceforth be accepted in the Church as given by divine inspiration so as to constitute the Scriptures of the New Covenant, and when was it done? The churches did it—the people, the Christian communities, together with and under the guidance of their pastors, theologians, and teachers; and it was accomplished through the slow course of three centuries. Or, if one be pleased so to express it, the New Testament “canonized itself.” True, certain provincial councils—though never a General Council—took action on the question. The most notable of these met in the city of Carthage in the year 397. But it was not in the mind of this Council of Carthage to declare that, having thoroughly examined the claims of the various Christian writings, or having received some special illumination from on high, it had decided, as a matter of its own judgment, that the twenty-seven books which it had chosen out, and these only, were to be taken as New Testament Scripture. The Council only enumerated in its canon the books which the Church had already fixed upon practically as divinely inspired and authoritative. It registered the gradually formed selective Christian judgment.²

So, then, acquiescence in that unwritten law which in all ages has played so powerful a part in the regulation of human conduct, and which we need but open our eyes to observe in its influence upon standards of living, social forms, modes of speech, religious beliefs and observances, in communities and organized societies of the present day—acquiescence in the decisions of this

¹Even Pope Leo XIII. is reported to have said concerning the dogma of papal infallibility: “The truth is not in me but in the Church.” Which seems to mean that it was only what was believed and taught generally in the Roman Catholic Church, as set forth by her representative scholars, theologians, and others, that he would ever declare *ex cathedra* to be true in doctrine or morals.

²Moore, “The New Testament in the Christian Church,” pp. 26, 159-163.

same pervasive spirit of Custom was the nearest approach that had yet been made to general ecclesiastic legislation.

Thus the external unifying of the Church went on. Bishops' councils and the contagion of custom were giving form to that inner unity of the spirit which the Christian people must needs have in Christ the Lord. Thus the Church, with all its faults, became consciously catholic, more and more catholic; a great spiritual commonwealth; an ecclesiastical republic; its stronger communities helping to bear the infirmities of the wavering and the weak; strengthening itself against divisive forces in faith and polity; commanding the respect of the Empire under whose government, often as yet antagonistic, it had arisen and was living its aggressive life.

But it was not an intercongregational *organization*. Somewhat less than even a federation, it was an informal but vital and effective catholic alliance of the churches; and it has had no worthy successor thus far in Christian history.

4. THE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS.

(6) Whether, in case of Christianity's keeping aloof from all alliance with the State, a strictly ecumenical and authoritative council of the Christian Churches would ever have been held, is but a speculative question. It is certain, however, that any process of development that may have begun in this direction was quickly completed by the Imperial "commandment and will." The first Christian emperor did it. In A.D. 325 was convoked his Council of Nice.

Not unreasonably may it be supposed that Constantine's main motive in calling together this august synod was the unity of the Roman Empire. For he was more politician than Christian.¹

Manifestly in the administration of any national government

¹"With the ardent desire for enforcing unanimity on those whom he was now called to govern, he combined a vague but profound reverence for the character and powers of the heads of the Christian community. From the union of these two feelings sprang (as he himself tells us, 'by a divine inspiration') the first idea of convening a Council of the representatives of the whole Church." (Stanley, "Hist. of the Eastern Church," p. 177.)

the national unity must be a prime object. Hence the sovereign's patronage of an established religion, his deprecation of sects, his high-handed persecution of dissent with dungeon, sword, and flame. It is not to be assumed—whether he be a Louis XIV., a Henry VIII., or a Peter the Great—that personally he cares more for one form of religious faith than for another. He may or may not; but in either case his ultimate aim is probably not the interests of any particular religion, but the strength and perpetuity of the State, and especially, it may be, of his own royal house. It is his will that the Church, through uniformity of creed and usage, should help to consolidate the nation, and not, through parties and schisms and variant politics, tend to loosen the bonds of national unity and peace.

Now of this purpose to exploit the religious faith and practices of the people in the interest of national solidarity, the Roman Empire offers one among many instructive examples. True, the various tribal cults were not prohibited. There were excellent political reasons why they should be tolerated. But, moreover, there was a religion that Rome did attempt to make universal: she attempted to universalize the “worship of the divine majesty of Rome” in the person of the Emperor. In all the provinces, even unto the remotest districts, all men must bow down at this shrine and adore this god. Thus would the sinews of the national life be everywhere strengthened.¹

But meantime Christianity had appeared on the scene, and now for a long time had been contending with paganism in all its forms for mastery in the Empire. One or the other the Imperial government might naturally enough feel committed to protect, favor, and render universally prevalent. Which, then, should it be? Constantine chose Christianity—as some one has said, half convinced of its truth and wholly convinced of its political expediency—and was seeking to make it the sole religion of the Roman people.

Yet the Emperor, doubtless to his sore disappointment, found Christianity itself torn into bitterly contending parties. Just at

¹Ramsay, “St. Paul the Traveler,” pp. 134, 135.

this time it was divided on a vital question of Christian doctrine. Trinitarianism and Arianism were each claiming to be the true and original faith of the Church. To the mind of the Emperor, as civil ruler (whatever may have been his personal religious feeling or conviction), such a state of things was intolerable. There must be unity of creed; and it was to secure this result that he summoned the bishops of the Church to meet in the first General Council.¹

It was bishops only that he summoned. As many as three hundred and eighteen of them assembled. All, with probably eight exceptions, were from the East, the seat of theological learning and activity. By no means perfect either in mind or in character, borne away in many instances by a spirit of violent partisanship, and thus far unfit for the vision of spiritual truth, they may nevertheless be taken perhaps as representing what was highest and best in the Church of that age. They wrangled no little; but they also showed signs of wisdom and charity, and, we may believe, of providential guidance and enlightenment. Some of them were confessors; some were martyrs, bearing on their bodies the marks of cruel persecutions which they had suffered for Christ's sake—"living witnesses of martyrdom in which they had shared the torment, though not the palm."

The great Emperor, seated on a richly gilt throne, opened the council with an exhortation to concord and unity: "Do not delay, ministers of God and good servants of our common Lord and Saviour, to remove all grounds of difference and to wind up by laws of peace every link of controversy." "For to me," he assured them, "far worse than any war or battle is the civil war of

¹Intermediate between the provincial and the ecumenical council was such a synod as that of Arles, in the South of Gaul. It was convened by the Emperor Constantine, in the year 314, and with special reference to a case in connection with the Donatist schism. Having met, however, it also decided questions of more general interest, such as the rebaptism of heretics, the observance of Easter, and the ordination of bishops. "We may look on the assembly at Arles as a general council of the West (or of the Roman patriarchate). It cannot, however, pass for an ecumenical council, for the reason that the other patriarchs did not take any part in it, and indeed were not invited to it." (Hefele, "History of the Christian Councils." Bk. I., sec. 15.)

the Church of God." A number of bishops had put into his hands letters filled with accusations against their fellow-bishops. He burned the letters, unread, as an object lesson, in the presence of the whole assembly. A man of war preaching peace to the unfaithful sons of peace—the humiliating scene has been more than once repeated since that day. Nor has an end yet come to "*the civil war of the Church of God.*"

The deliberations of the council resulted in a definition of the faith of the Church as to the nature of our Lord. And the Emperor pronounced the decree that those who refused to sign the orthodox creed should be banished, that the books of Arius should be burned, and that the penalty of reading them should be death. For such, alas! was a part of the method of this man of war and preacher of peace for putting an end to the existing civil war of the Church of God. Let us gladly recall that it was no part of the method of the man whose name stands more notable than any other as representative of the doctrinal definition of the Council; for "it is proof," said the great Athanasius, "that men have no confidence in their own faith when they use force and compel unwilling men to think as they do."

In addition to this fundamental question in doctrine, another cause of widespread division was dealt with at Nice. This was the Easter controversy, which, after having persisted more than a hundred years, had not yet been laid to rest—certain churches still celebrating the Christian redemption on one day and the rest on another. But now "the great and holy Synod" spoke with the voice of authority, and enacted the rule that the Sunday immediately following the full moon on or next after the vernal equinox should be observed as the Christian paschal day. And it is this rule that has given direction to the "Easter" customs of Christendom from that time to the present.

There was also a canon—namely, the Fifth—that might be specially noted as illustrative of the legislative efforts which were making for the unification of the churches. It read thus: "Concerning those, whether of the clergy or of the laity, who have been excommunicated in the several provinces, let the provision

of the canon be observed by the bishop which provides that persons cast out by some be not readmitted by others. Nevertheless inquiry should be made whether they have been excommunicated by captiousness or contentiousness, or any such like ungracious disposition in the bishop." And then follows a provision for the holding of two semiannual sessions of the provincial council, one in the spring and the other in the fall, for the consideration of such cases.

How had it been in the earlier time? A church member, whether minister or layman, might be expelled from a particular congregation, and received into the fellowship of some other congregation.¹ Thus the idea of the separateness and independence of the churches, rather than that of their oneness and interdependence, was encouraged. But there was an increasing sense of unfitness in this state of things, which sentiment crystallized into this prohibitory canon. Expulsion from any local church must be regarded as expulsion from the universal Church. Not separateness but oneness, not independence but interdependence, was emphasized.

And if complaint should be made that this law might work injustice to the excommunicated person, the reply would be that the very contrary was true. Because such a person could now have his case reviewed by a more competent tribunal, free from local disturbing influences and prejudices—even by a provincial council. To belong to the meanest village in the Roman Empire was to belong to the Empire: similarly to belong to the feeblest congregation in the Christian Church was to belong to the Church. It was a privilege and an honor; and it was the law. Let the idea of the local brotherhood be more perfectly fulfilled in the idea of the universal brotherhood—to be or not to be a member

¹"If he had been expelled for a moral offense, no doubt the causes which led to his expulsion by one community would prevent his reception by another. But where the ground of expulsion had been the holding of peculiar opinions, or the breach of a local by-law, it might be possible to find some other community which would ignore the one or condone the other." (Hatch, "Organization of Early Christian Churches," p. 176.)

of *a* church is to be or not to be a member of *the* Church. Such seems to have been the spirit of the law.

5. ECUMENICAL COUNCILS SUBSEQUENT TO THE FIRST.

After this first of the General Councils, six others, acknowledged as such by both the Roman and the Eastern Church, were held: at Constantinople (381), at Ephesus (431), at Chalcedon (451), two later ones at Constantinople, and the last, like the first, at Nice (787). These all, it will be noticed, were held in the East. Not only so, but in none of them was the West proportionately, or in any full and proper sense, represented. At First Nice, as we have seen, there were only eight Western representatives; at Chalcedon, with its five or six hundred members, there were only five; and at First Constantinople, none at all.

Now we have also to bear in mind that these Seven were all episcopal councils, made up of bishops only. Presbyters or deacons might attend, take part in the proceedings, and exert what influence they could; but except in case of their being representatives of bishops, they were not permitted to vote. As to the laity, they were present neither in person nor by representatives—save as they were represented by that most powerful of all laymen, the Emperor himself. True, they still had a vote at home, for many years, in the election of their bishops; but the bishops when in council did not act in the name of the laity, but “in their own names as successors of the Apostles.” The supreme organization of Christianity had become purely prelatic.

Were the Seven Councils, then, real or only so-called ecumenical bodies? So-called rather than real. The real ecumenical council would represent not merely the one order of bishops, and these chiefly in one large field of the ecclesiastic territory. It would express, as far as any possible assembly could, the mind of the whole Church, the millions of laymen as well as the thousands of ministers, the collective conscience, experience, and judgment of all the congregations of Christ throughout the world.

Such a representative Council of organized Christianity—when and where shall its meeting be? Will the civil governments have

to lead the way with International Arbitration in some Parliament of the Nations, and the federation of the Churches wait upon the federation of the States? Are ever-multiplying discoveries and inventions and intellectual enlightenment to be used of God to hasten its coming? Far away in the silent future, is it not? We may indeed think so, as men count the years. But not too far for faith and hope which are in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it may be nearer than we think.

However this may be, we are assured that the Church is not heading nowhither. It shall come into its kingdom of visible unity, universality, and power, though we know not when or how or "with what body" it will come. And then shall the world also believe in the divine Apostleship of Jesus—even as he prayed under the solemn shadow of the cross that it should be.

6. DEPENDENCE OF THESE COUNCILS ON THE EMPEROR.

A word of emphasis on a fact alluded to a moment ago with respect to the supreme organization of Christianity. When this organization is described as purely prelatie, there is a certain grand exception that ought, for the whole truth's sake, to be made. Higher in ecclesiastic power than even the bishop of Rome was a succession of laymen—the Roman emperors. The ecumenical councils were all convoked by imperial authority and presided over, except in two cases, by the emperor in the person of his commissioners (he himself being sometimes present)—though patriarchs, and their representatives, and especially the legates of the bishop of Rome, also took part in the presidency. Their decrees were signed by the emperor. And their expenses were paid not by the Church but out of the public treasury.¹ For the Empire not only included territorially the Christian world, but also combined a munificent patronage with the exercise of a large authority, in its relation to the Church. The idea still survives in the Church of England, which officially declares that "General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes."²

¹Schaff, *Church History*, Vol. III., pp. 335-337. ²Articles of Religion, xxi.

Verily it is not thus that we should have been glad, in tracing the course of the organizing of Christianity, to see the Church of the New Covenant maintain its unity and fulfill its mission. Why should our Lord have permitted his kingdom in its outward and organized form, allying itself with the magistrate's scepter and availing itself of his sword, to become so largely a kingdom of this world? We cannot tell, except so far as we have learned to "see in a mirror darkly."

Neither can we tell why grave doctrinal errors should be permitted to creep into the Church and climb to places of age-long power. Nor can we tell why the earth itself, on which the whole vast result of human life is to be achieved, should have such wide frozen zones, and so many arid miles of gravel and sand, and such persistently recurring earthquakes, and the ever-present terror of our million million microscopic enemies in water and air. Such problems in their entirety—who would dream of solving them? Let them await their time.

But we may know that, with this same earth and this same Church, God is working out his great redeeming purpose through the ages. We may know that men, who are not mechanical products but free beings, whose highest perfection is perfection of character, must be divinely dealt with as such. We may know beyond a doubt that precious and wide-reaching are the uses of struggle and suffering, of search for truth, of difficult decisions, of conflict with evil—"the moral uses of dark things." Alike in the light of science, of personal experience, and of the New Testament, we may learn that both for individuals and for societies the condition of progress is labor, self-denial, overcoming.

Surely, then, it is believable that the manifold wisdom of God may be illustrated in the maintenance of his living truth and the perpetuation of his faithful witnesses, amid unceasing conflict with error within as well as without, rather than in miraculously defending his Church, from first to last, against all secularization and strife.

Meantime, whatever the darkness, the life-giving light is ever falling from the cross of Christ, the fatherhood of God, the heaven of sacrificial love.

And the Church—it is not the organization or ecclesiasticism that men call by its name. It is the confessing Congregation against which the gates of death shall not prevail.

With the Second Council of Nice the succession of Councils, that with any degree of appropriateness may be named *ecumenical*, came to a close. The Roman councils that are so named—such, for example, as the five Lateran Councils, that of Constance, that of Trent, and that of the Vatican—are entitled to this designation only on the hypothesis that the Church of Rome is itself the Church Universal; for neither Eastern nor Evangelical Christianity had any representation in them.

7. DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY OF ECUMENICAL COUNCILS.

What authority was ascribed to the doctrinal deliverances of a General Council? The next highest to Holy Scripture, which was accepted as formally and absolutely infallible.

But in the Church of Rome the doctrinal infallibility of the General Councils, their decisions being sanctioned by the pope, is distinctly taught.¹

In Protestantism all doctrinal deliverances of councils are to be judged by the teachings of Scripture. Neither theoretically nor practically are they held infallible. The appeal of Luther was first from the pope ill informed to the pope well informed; then from the pope to the Ecumenical Council; then from the Ecumenical Council to the scriptures: "Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by clear reasoning, un-

¹Leo the Great is quoted by the papal historians as saying that the decrees of Chalcedon were made under the instruction (*instruente*) of the Holy Spirit, Gregory the Great as professing his veneration of "the four first Councils equally with the four Gospels," and a number of the Fathers as sharing such sentiments. (See Hefele, "Hist. of the Christian Councils," Introd., sec. 8.) But these glowing utterances are not conclusive of the general mind of the early Church on this subject. "They were not held to be formally infallible, but to possess an authority proportioned to their universality, to be capable of being amended by subsequent councils upon better information, and to be subordinate to Scripture." (Smith and Cheetham's Dict. of Antiquities, Art. "Council," C.)

less I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless my conscience is thus bound by the Word of God, I cannot and will not retract." Holy Scripture the final authority, private judgment an inalienable right. Here is the historic standing-ground of Protestant Christianity.¹

Were it possible to-day for some truly ecumenical synod to be gathered together at some designated time and place, representing the Christianity of the whole world, its doctrinal decisions, like those of any local or denominational assembly, must be judged by the Holy Scriptures under the light of the Spirit of truth, and might be amended by some subsequent similar assembly.

But the evangelic communions make far larger use of the conciliar idea, recognizing its true place and value, than do the hierarchic bodies. Autocratic authority and the assumptions of inerrancy are excluded. The meeting face to face of the wisest and best; interchange of views; united prayer for divine wisdom; the promised presence of Him who now as heretofore is ever building and defending his Congregation—these are the principles of evangelic deliberative assemblies. And such assemblies are constituted in all grades, from a stewards' meeting, or a meeting for the election of a ruling elder, all the way up to a Methodist Ecumenical Conference, a Pan-Presbyterian Council, a Free Church Council, or an Evangelical Alliance. In many cases they are authorized to give counsel only; in many others, to enact laws and issue commands. They represent, in various degrees of universality, the Church in its multiform departments and undertakings. They direct its movements; they utilize its resources; they protect its unity.

¹"And when they [General Councils] be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God) they may err, and sometimes have erred even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they are taken out of Holy Scripture." (Thirty-Nine Articles, Art. XXI., "On the Authority of General Councils.") To the same effect is the Westminster Confession, XXXI. 2, 3.

Part III.



AUTONOMY.

(371)

There is a singularity which is the element of progress; but there is a catholicity which is the condition of permanence.—*B. F. Westcott.*

Ecclesiasticism has often put conscience in deadly peril. But history has also its warning against the intolerance of separatists.—*Newman Smyth.*

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great:
Christian love among the churches looked the twin of heathen hate.
—*Tennyson.*

Men are loath to be persuaded that they have spent so much breath to so little purpose, and have been so hot and eager for somewhat which at last appears to be a matter of Christian liberty.—*Stillingfleet.*

But what is left to men's *discretion* is not therefore meant to be left to their *indiscretion*.—*Richard Whately.*

In vain the surge's angry shock,
In vain the drifting sands;
Unharm'd upon the eternal rock
The eternal City stands. —*Samuel Johnson.*

I.

THE CONGREGATIONAL IDEA.

WE can imagine all the Christian congregations of the world united in a single organization—one world-wide, self-governing communion. But it would be simply a bold venture of the imagination. The most conspicuous and persistent attempt to actualize the conception has given rise to the chief tragedies of ecclesiastical history. Neither by force nor by rational, righteous, and brotherly methods has such a dream been able to find fulfillment hitherto.

We can imagine a national church. Let it be without organic connection with the state, self-governing. But let it be accepted with practical unanimity as representing the Christianity of the nation, and let it not extend beyond the national boundaries—one nation, one church. Such an ecclesiasticism has been proposed by certain serious inventive minds. But an example of it is not now to be found in any land. Indeed, in what age and under what sky has an example of it ever yet appeared?

What we do see is a number of separate and self-governing churches, occupying Christendom and penetrating continually into the missionary regions beyond. Some of them, happily, are becoming more and more closely assimilated in spirit, teaching, and labor for the kingdom of God. As to size, the disparity among them is great indeed. There are those that number no more than five or six persons—as, for instance, certain Congregational or Baptist churches—while on the other hand the Church of Rome reports a membership of over two hundred millions.

We see churches, also, that have lost their autonomy by submitting to the control of the state. These are national establishments—as in Germany, England, Russia—dependent for law and government upon the rulers of the respective nations in whose territories they are situated.¹

¹"We distinguish between a National and an Established Church; for the one we feel the utmost reverence, but the other we do not even respect. . . .

Now it is this denominational idea of organized Christianity that offers the present and final phase of our subject.

Nor, as a matter of course, shall we be content simply to bring the denomination in which we are personally most interested within the circle of observation. Rather let the radius be lengthened so that the chief organic forms in which the various churches of Christendom are facing the future shall be included. Thus at least may be avoided the not uncommon error of those who

take the rustic murmur of their burg
For the great wave that murmurs round the world.

And so also may we get a better understanding of that which is our own, and haply learn to appreciate it more truly.

It will be fitting to begin with the simplest and most primitive of all the ways of church organizing—with the Congregational Idea.

Each church, or congregation of Christians, must govern itself and manage its own affairs, by a majority vote of its membership, independently of all outside authority whatever. That is the original formative idea of congregationalism.

Is it also the fundamental New Testament idea of structural Christianity? Whether this be so or not, it is certain that other organic ideas than that of local democratic self-government became dominant in the second century. And not until fifteen hundred years had passed did the congregational polity which, it is believed with good reason, prevailed in the New Testament churches, begin to take form and reappear.¹ Its representatives

The church that has failed to make a nation believing, reverent, and dutiful to God may be an Established Church, without being in any real or even in a tolerated sense national." (Fairbairn, "Studies in Religion and Theology," p. 4.)

"It [congregationalism] was originally a divine gift, made through spiritual guidance of the New Testament churches to the Church of all time. It was a gift germinal and typical, though crude; tender, though fresh and vigorous. It suffered in the early centuries an arrest of development: it lay dormant yet vital in the garden of the Lord through many medieval centuries. In the sixteenth century in England it was dug out of its place of hiding and sleeping with the sword of the Word." (Ladd, "Principles of Church Polity," p. 338.)

were the Anabaptists of the European Continent and the English Separatists.

Let us give attention first to the latter body, and trace some of the conditions and circumstances in which its congregations originated.

I. ORIGINAL MOTIVE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

It was in the sixteenth century. The Church of England was an episcopally governed Establishment. The Puritans, a strong and influential party, were opposed to episcopacy (as well as to Romish dogmas and practices) but favorable to the union of Church and State—especially favorable, if their successors of the next century who emigrated to America may be taken as typical, to the Church's getting control of the State. All baptized persons were regarded (save in the rare case of excommunication) as church members—which, indeed, was equally the case on the Continent. The sovereign, without any reference whatever to his moral or religious character, must be not only a member of the Church but its supreme ruler. As might, therefore, easily have been foreseen, there was practically no discipline in moral conduct. But it is contrary to the word of Christ that men should be enrolled as Christians simply on the ground of their baptism in infancy; and that the notorious evil-liver, even "profane atheists" and "scandalous mockers," should kneel side by side at the Lord's table with the true, however imperfect, believer. This all-inclusive membership was destructive of the spiritual character and power of a Christian congregation. At least there were Englishmen of that time who had this conviction. The Puritans had it; and they looked to the civil magistrates to effect the needed reformation.¹ There were others, however, a feeble folk, who saw no remedy for the prevalent lack of dis-

¹It should not be overlooked that the Puritans were as much concerned for a pure and evangelical church as were the Separatists; but they hoped and strove for reform from within. "They [the Puritans] say, the time is not yet come to build the Lord's house (Haggai i.); they must tarry for the magistrates and for Parliament to do it. They want the civil sword forthwith. . . . For his [Christ's] government and discipline is wanting (say

cipline so long as Church and State were united. What should they do?

Disestablishment, a living question for the present generation, was not dreamed of at that time. Nevertheless something might be done at once. Those who believed the administration of the Establishment to be other than that of a true church of Christ could withdraw from it and form self-governing congregations of their own in which the word of God might be preached, worship offered, and *discipline administered*, according to their conception of the New Testament teaching. And this is what they did. These were the Separatists, who were afterwards called Independents (unlovely titles, both) and Congregationalists.

The original motive of Congregationalism, then, was neither doctrinal nor legislative, but disciplinary. It was distinctly a moral motive—not a desire for a scriptural in place of an unscriptural creed, nor a scriptural in place of an unscriptural form of government, but the desire for a scriptural in place of an unscriptural state of discipline.

The Separatists did reach the conclusion, however, in the rapid course of study and investigation, that the polity which, chiefly or wholly for disciplinary purposes, they had been led to adopt was in accordance with the teachings of Jesus and his Apostles. It was not—so they held—an invention of their own but a renaissance of the New Testament order.

Another formative idea of the ecclesiastical government thus initiated was that of the fellowship of the churches. Though each must stand absolutely independent of all control by the

they), but we keep it not away.” (Browne, “Reformation without Tarrying for Any” (Old South Leaflets), pp. 2, 3.)

“The Puritan remembered that the sixteenth century had seen the constitution, liturgy, and doctrinal standards of the English Church essentially altered at least four times by the united action of the Sovereign and of Parliament. . . . They constantly hoped that that which had been established by law would be changed by legislative act. Nor was there, at first, anything that seemed unlikely in this supposition.” (Walker, “Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism,” p. 97.)

rest, nevertheless each must come into cordial association with the rest. This idea, indeed, was inevitable. It is as old as Christianity and as continuous as the Church itself. In truth it is hardly to be conceived that churches of the same faith and order should exist side by side without some sort of intercommunication and communion. They must needs affiliate with one another.

2. ENGLISH CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY.

The first advocate and exemplifier of these views, "the father of modern Congregationalism," was Robert Browne (d. 1633, aged about 80). He was educated at Cambridge University. About the year 1580, in the city of Norwich, he became pastor of what may be called the first Congregational church of modern times.

Browne came to be looked upon as a fanatic, a grievous troubler of Israel in both his sayings and doings. In fact, he was a hot-headed, if not a headstrong, young man, who embodied very well the violent spirit of the times. So severely was he opposed by the Establishment that both pastor and flock were fain to flee to the Continent. Here, in the town of Middleburg, Holland, he wrote tracts—for example, "Reformation without Tarrying for Any"—which were sent in sheets to England, and there bound and distributed. In the course of a few years, however, he again appears in England, and after repeated imprisonment by the civil authorities becomes reconciled to the Established Church. For the last forty-two years of his life we find him holding the rectorship of the parish of Achurch cum Thorpe. He was accused of much misconduct in old age; and his death occurred in a jail to which he was committed for striking an officer of justice.

It was indeed a difficult career to explain. But not so the views on church polity which were set forth by the impulsive and indiscreet young reformer. These are entirely sane and clear. He taught that civil magistrates ought not to exercise any ecclesiastical authority, being divinely intended to rule the nation,

and not the Church;¹ that it may become the duty of Christ's followers to withdraw from existing religious bodies, and form congregations of their own, for the sake of pure teaching and salutary discipline; that a church is a company of Christian believers united in one holy communion by a willing covenant with God, under the government of God and Christ; that all church authority is in Christ the Lord, and is expressed through the action of the whole congregation; that the scriptural officers of a church are a pastor, a teacher, one or more elders, one or more relievers (deacons), and one or more "widows" (deaconesses); that different churches ought to associate together for mutual counsel and guidance; that Christians ought to watch over and reprove each other as may be deemed fit, jealously guarding the purity of the Church. Such was Congregationalism in the mind and from the pen of its first pronounced representative in modern Christianity.²

The church in Holland, however, in which Browne tried to realize his ideal, proved a disappointment. Its members, exiles though they were for conscience' sake, failed to show themselves capable of self-government. There seems to have been a larger

¹"Go to, therefore, and the outward power and civil forcings let us leave to the magistrates; to rule the commonwealth in all outward justice belongeth to them; but let the Church rule in spiritual wise and not in worldly manner, by a lively law preached and not by a civil law written." ("Reformation without Tarrying for Any," p. 16.)

²For a very full and spirited account, read Dexter's "Congregationalism as Seen in Its Literature," Lecture II. This author makes no question of finding the true historic origin of modern Congregationalism in Brownism: "Of one thing as a matter of sober history there can be no doubt: that this system—which may as fairly be called Brownism as the inductive is called the Baconian philosophy, . . . this system—which, as we shall have occasion to see, was soon swept aside and out of sight by rival and variant systems, and covered with obloquy from its founder's fate—proved yet to have vitality enough, and enough of adaptation to the demands of human life, to resume and reassert its interrupted sway; so that, although the thought may not be in their minds, the Independents of England and the Congregationalists of America, more nearly than any other, are to-day in lineal descent from that little Norwich church of two hundred and ninety-six years ago" (p. 114).

development of inquisition, bickering, and division among them than of Christly admonition and discipline.

Yet in England the idea persisted, and was modified from time to time by its advocates in the direction of greater practicableness. One of these modifications was that of Henry Barrowe, who died on the scaffold, a martyr to his faith, on April 6, in the thirty-fifth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign. According to Barrowe, the congregation should elect elders as its rulers, and thus govern itself not directly but through representatives. Still it must stand independent of all ecclesiastical government except its own; and so it cannot become Presbyterian, but notwithstanding its ruling eldership will remain congregational.

Of this ecclesiological doctrine, which has been named after its author *Barrowism*, two schools developed: the High-Church (as it may be called for lack of a better name), which held that the elders alone ought to govern, and the Low-Church, which held that the decisions of the elders must be confirmed by the consent of the whole congregation.

Even this internal and local presbyterial oversight, however, was, in the eyes of some Separatists, unscriptural and hurtful. The congregation, they maintained, cannot shift its responsibility for government and discipline upon a select number of men, but must claim its own rights and bear its own burdens. Christ said not, "Tell it to the elders," but, "Tell it to the church;" and it was unbelievable that the elders are the church. Accordingly in the congregation of John Robinson, "the Pilgrim pastor," at Leyden, the eldership was regarded as simply an office of counsel and moral influence, not of rule. The government was in the hands of the whole brotherhood of the faithful. In this, therefore, Robinson and his people were more nearly Brownists than Barrowists.

In England, Congregationalism advanced from its humble beginnings till, in the time of the Commonwealth, it rose to prominence and power. Both the Lord Protector himself and a majority of the leading men of his government were favorable to its form of polity. It was influential, though far from dominant,

in the Westminster Assembly. Its annals have shone with not a few of the brightest names in English Christianity—Owen, Watts, Doddridge, Jay, Binney, Dale, Joseph Parker, A. M. Fairbairn.

It has made but little use of the eldership. For many years it looked with little favor also upon associations and councils of the churches. But in the year 1832 the "Congregational Union of England and Wales" was formed, with deliberative and advisory powers and with a Declaration of Faith, adopted in 1833. Its meetings are held semiannually, and its influence has been promotive of fraternity and good works.

3. AMERICAN CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY.

The history of John Robinson's congregation affords an interesting illustration of the Congregational idea. It began three hundred years ago as a "house church" in the home of William Brewster, the postmaster at Scrooby, England. There, according to Bradsford's "History," a company of Christians "joined themselves by a covenant of the Lord into a church estate in the fellowship of the gospel, to walk in all his ways made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatever it shall cost them." Of the three great ideas represented by this covenant of a despised little church of Christ in the house of William Brewster, in the year 1606—obedience at all costs to the will of God as it may be made known, equality and fellowship of Christians in the Lord, and the right to congregational self-rule—Congregationalism has always stood as a conspicuous example. In this particular case the Scrooby covenanters were soon called upon to pay the "costs." They were driven by persecution from their own land. They found a refuge, however, first at Amsterdam and afterwards at Leyden. Thence, eleven years later, one hundred and two of them, including wives and children, set sail in the Mayflower for their stormy voyage to the coast of America.

So it was from this Scrooby-Amsterdam-Leyden congregation of John Robinson that the Pilgrim Fathers came to New

England. Here the eldership was exalted into a ruling office. It is true that, according to the Cambridge Platform, which was adopted by a synod of New England churches in 1648—the Puritans of Massachusetts Colony having meantime become Congregationalists¹—the elders were only to admit members approved by the church, and to excommunicate members renounced by the church.² But it would seem that practically in either case the people coöperated little or not at all. The pastor would sometimes even veto the votes of the congregation.

There were also tendencies toward making larger use of associations of the churches, and strengthening their power and influence. Such proposals were offered as that "each ministerial association make up an ecclesiastical council, or presbytery, to hear and determine all affairs too mighty for disposal by a single church;" and such declarations as that "the consociation of churches is the very soul and life of the Congregational scheme, necessary to the very *esse* as well as *bene* of it."

But there were countercurrents. These were well represented by two noted and influential men—by John Wise, "the first great American democrat," a trenchant and fiery controvertist, in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and Nathaniel Emmons, a man of preëminent ability as preacher, teacher, and theologian, a century later. This reactionary movement increased in strength till the churches were brought back substantially to the original Congregational idea. In this they stand at the present day—without an eldership (apart from the pastor) as well as without authoritative control by any association or council of churches.

¹"They had formerly professed to despise the Separatists, but scarcely had the shores of England receded from their view when they felt a sense of freedom as never before, and this feeling took a deeper hold on them until they found themselves no longer Puritans in the original sense, but Separatists pure and simple." (Elson, "History of the United States," p. 106.)

²"The ruling elder's work is to join with the pastor and teacher. . . . 1. To open and shut the doors of God's house, by the admission of members approved by the church . . . and by excommunication of notorious and obstinate offenders renounced by the church." (Cambridge Platform, VII 2.)

To-day, however, both in British and in American Congregationalism, the emphasis is laid on denominational coöperation rather than local independence. The need of united and harmonious action in matters of common concernment—such as the preparation of candidates for the ministry, the strengthening of feeble churches, the taking up of work in neglected fields, the conduct of benevolent and missionary enterprises—is more fully provided for. Thus the work of the representative bodies of the Church has been enlarged. And while the autonomy of the local congregation is maintained, the larger “autonomy of the denomination,” it has been urged, “should be the next step in the development of the Congregational polity.”¹

The growth of this idea of a more distinct and effective denominational autonomy is shown in the frequency and regularity of the meetings of the general synod, or council, of American Congregationalism during the last half century, as compared with the previous practice. The first meeting of this kind was held in the year 1637; the second, in 1646, with adjourned meetings the two following years; the third, not for two hundred years afterwards—namely, in 1852; the fourth, in 1865. But in the year 1871, the “National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States” was organized, and it has held triennial meetings continuously from that time.

Two of the declarations of this Council, made at the time of its establishment, set forth in the clearest possible manner the fundamental principles alike of historic and present-day Congregationalism:

They [the Congregational churches of the United States, by delegation assembled] agree in the belief that the right of government resides in local

¹“It [the National Council] indorsed radical changes of polity in the direction of compactness and consolidation of Congregational interests, of supervision, and of putting the direction of benevolent and missionary work into the hands of representatives of the churches.

“It indorsed the plan for a national Congregational brotherhood and appointed a committee of twenty-nine to organize it.

“It appointed a committee of nine in the interests of more efficient ministerial training and equipment.” (“The Congregationalist,” Oct. 26, 1907.)

churches, or congregations of believers, who are responsible directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, the one Head of the Church Universal and of all particular churches; but that all churches, being in communion one with another as parts of Christ's Catholic Church, have mutual duties subsisting in the obligations of fellowship.

The churches, therefore, while establishing this National Council, for the furtherance of the common interests and work of all the churches, do maintain the scriptural and inalienable right of each church to self-government and administration; and this National Council shall never exercise legislative or judicial authority, nor consent to act as a Council of Reference.

4. PRINCIPLES AND RULES OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

This, then, is Congregationalism. It represents the two great complementary conceptions of autonomy and fellowship. Here is its distinction: no other system combines and embodies these two principles in its organic law.

It is a pure democracy. The government, both legislative and judicial, is not only for the people but by them; and not indirectly through chosen representatives, but by their own direct action. Of necessity, therefore, it is bodied forth in thousands of little ecclesiastical bodies, either widely separated or side by side, each of which is democratically self-governing. The operation of no law extends beyond the congregation in which it is enacted.

Taking American Congregationalism as the type, let us mark some of the more important features of Congregational economy:

The organization of the churches is simple and consistent. Members that have reached the age of twenty-one years are entitled to a vote on all questions. The officers are the pastor (or minister, or elder) and the deacons. No distinction of grades or orders—such as the diaconate, the presbyterate, the episcopate—is recognized. The pastor is not a ruler, but only the moderator *ex officio* of congregational meetings. In case of his absence any member of the meeting may be chosen to preside. It is his duty, while in charge of a congregation, to do the customary service of a Christian pastor. Once ordained, he is regarded as retaining his ministerial office even when not holding a pastoral charge.

The deacons assist in the administration of the Lord's Supper, and care for the sick and the poor, and are advisers of the pastor. Their election, which was formerly for life, is in the present day usually for a term of years. For this reason the rite of ordination to this office, which was also formerly observed, has in most churches been discontinued.

The deacons, together with the clerk (who is elected to keep the records of the church and the roll of membership), in some instances the treasurer, and two or three other members, constitute what is called the Church Committee. It is the duty of this committee to consult with the pastor concerning the interests of the congregation, to prepare business for congregational meetings, and to present at such meetings the names of persons to be received into the church or expelled from its membership.

Much use is made of Occasional Councils. These are composed of ministers and lay delegates from a number of churches, and are convened at the request of some particular church, sometimes to ordain or install a minister, and sometimes to give advice on some occasion of importance. These occasions are such, for example, as the following: When a number of persons desire to organize themselves into a church; when a candidate for the ministry wishes to be approved for ordination; when there is serious dissension in a church; and so on. Congregational usage also recognizes such a council as the ordaining body. In all cases, however, even in that of the trial of a minister and his expulsion from membership in a local church, authoritative action can be taken by the local church only.

Besides these Occasional Councils, convened for special cases, there are assemblies that meet regularly for consultation, the promotion of fellowship, and the general direction and encouragement of the work of the churches. These are Associations, State Conferences (in a few states called State Associations, and in a few other State Conventions), and the National Council. They are all composed of representatives, lay and ministerial, from the churches.

The Association represents the churches of a comparatively small district, and usually meets twice a year. Here the condition of the churches is reported, and various questions relating to their needs and the advancement of the cause of Christ among them are discussed. It is expected of every Congregational church that it shall have membership in such an Association.

State Conferences represent the churches of a state or territory; and it is required that the churches thus represented shall be members of some Association. In its general purpose and proceedings the State Conference differs but little from the Association. Its meetings are annual.

The National Council is composed of delegates, either ministers or laymen, elected by Associations, State Conferences, faculties of colleges and theological seminaries, and societies for Christian work. Only the representatives of Associations and Conferences, however, vote in its meetings. It is recommended that the delegations, as far as possible, consist of ministers and laymen in equal numbers. The meetings of the National Council are triennial; but special sessions may be called at any time at the request of five State Conferences.¹

¹"It has helped greatly in the solution of important questions and shown that union is possible without uniformity. It will in the future be increas-

It must not be overlooked that these regular assemblies, district, state, and national, like the Occasional Councils, are permitted in no case whatever to exercise authority over the churches. They meet for mutual sympathy and helpfulness in extending the kingdom of Christ. They advise, but never command. Still it is in their power to deny fellowship to a church which, because of rejecting their advice, or for any other cause, may be deemed unworthy; just as on the other hand any church, in the exercise of its own judgment and conscience, may withdraw from association with them. In like manner the Association and the State Conference to which a minister belongs may withdraw fellowship from him, or he from them.

Candidates for the ministry are expected to pursue a course of literary and theological preparation, and to be approved, or nominated, by some body of ministers or of ministers and laymen (though this custom, it seems, is not always observed). They are then eligible to be called to the pastorate of a church, ordained to the ministry, and installed as pastors. The ordination itself should be performed with prayer and the imposition of hands by a council called for the purpose; and so also should each separate installation in the pastorate. At the close of the ceremony, the right hand of fellowship is given by the council to the newly ordained minister, who is thus received into recognized association with his ministerial brethren.

Lay ordination and installation is contrary to the prevalent practice, though not to the fundamental principles of Congregationalism. "Let them be ordained by the leathern mitten of the laity rather than not at all."¹

The missionary work of the churches is carried on through voluntary societies. Of these the oldest and most notable is the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. This, indeed, is the oldest foreign missionary society in the United States. Its originators were a little group of theological students, Samuel John Mills and others, at Andover Seminary. Organized a century ago (1810), the American Board is represented in the foreign field, according to recent statistics, by 594 missionaries and 4,125 native laborers. And while it cannot be shown that the polity of Congregationalism is itself especially well adapted to either home or foreign evangelization, the enlightened interest of its people in this work, as proved by their pecuniary contributions, is unsurpassed except in the extraordinary instance of the Moravian Church.

ingly the rallying place and unifying power of the denomination." (Boynton, "The Congregational Way," p. 136.)

¹Boynton, "The Congregational Way;" Walker, "Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism;" Ladd, "Principles of Church Polity."

5. RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE BAPTIST CHURCHES.

Earlier in origin than the Congregationalists, and earlier likewise in the adoption of a purely democratic form of government, were the Baptists. They appeared first in Switzerland, as the despised sect of Anabaptists,¹ toward the close of the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Many things were they called to suffer at the hands of both the Protestant State Church and the Romanists. Confiscation of property, imprisonment, slavery, exile, and burning at the stake were the means employed for their extermination. Many also were the fanatical excesses of belief and conduct into which, through ignorance, emotionalism, and persecution, they were driven. These fanatical vagaries discredited what was true and good in their testimony, breaking its force and bringing it into contempt.² Nevertheless, their numbers increased and their doctrines spread far and wide.

Narrowly sectarian, were they not? Under the circumstances it was well-nigh inevitable that they should be so. Besides, as some one has aptly said: "It is quite possible for a flowerpot or a religious body to be exceeding narrow, and yet to harbor the germinating seed of something very great." It was a prophetic utterance of one of the early martyrs of this particular "religious body," Balthasar Hübmaier: "Truth is immortal; and though for a long time she be imprisoned, scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified and buried, she will yet rise victorious on the third day and will reign and triumph." Nor has the subsequent history of the persecuted congregations for which this eloquent Christian witness-bearer died at the stake, dishonored his faith. The membership of their successors is numbered now by the million.

In the Low Countries they followed the leadership of a devout, sensible, and conscientious Christian teacher, Menno Simons; and were called, after his name, Mennonites.

Before the close of the sixteenth century and in the early part of the seventeenth a number of Baptists might be found in En-

¹Some Baptist writers make a distinction between Anabaptists and Baptists.

²Neal, "History of the Puritans," Vol. I., p. 137.

gland. Like their brethren on the Continent, whence indeed many of them had fled as refugees, they were made to eat the bitter bread of affliction: witness the sweet-spirited, imaginative genius, John Bunyan, suffering so long the "noisomeness and ill usage" of a seventeenth century jail for conscience' sake. "Of whom"—humble, elect, heroic spirits—neither "the world" nor the Church of their day was "worthy."

The Baptists have held with remarkable consistency and unanimity the theory of a pure ecclesiastic democracy. No "Barrowism" seems ever to have disturbed it. Not that this idea of government is universally practiced by them; for in many cases—perhaps in nearly all—congregations are ruled, as a matter of fact, by the few rather than the many. But the purely democratic theory is everywhere maintained as a Scripture doctrine; and all church members have an equal right to practice it, if they will. The idea of individualism is carried to a further extreme than among the present-day Congregationalists.

The Regular Baptists of the United States, beginning with a feeble little "church in the wilderness," organized by Roger Williams in 1639, have increased unto a membership of over five millions. Strongly denominational, cut off by their beliefs from full fellowship with other Christian denominations, they have embodied their views of New Testament teaching as to the constitution of a Christian church, in ever-multiplying congregations throughout the land.

The consensus of belief as to church organization in the American Baptist churches is about as follows:

A church is a company of true believers in Christ—and hence of regenerate persons—baptized on profession of their faith and united in a Christian covenant. Baptism is by "the immersion, dipping, or burying a candidate in the water." There is no other scriptural or permissible mode.

Each church, or congregation, is self-governing. As to its laws, it does not make but only executes them. They are to be found in the one authoritative statute book of Christ's churches—namely, the New Testament.

The officers of a church are of two classes only—pastors and deacons. A pastor is a bishop, or elder (the two terms being interchangeable in the New Testament, and therefore to be so used now), who has the oversight of a congregation; an evangelist is a bishop, or elder, who travels from place to place as a preacher of the gospel.

Any number of persons, though it be two only, may unite to form a church; and every member of a church, without respect to age, sex, intelligence, or maturity of Christian character, is entitled to vote.¹

Though each church chooses and ordains its own minister, this is regularly done, as in Congregational churches, with the approval of a Council called for the purpose, and consisting of an invited company (presbytery) of ministers, or of ministers and laymen, from other churches. The form of ordination includes prayer and the laying on of hands; and any person whom the candidate and the church shall select may perform the ceremony.

Indeed, the Occasional Council serves substantially the same particular purposes in the Baptist as in the Congregational churches.

Deacons are not only to have the care of the sick and the poor and of various temporalities, and to distribute the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper, but also to counsel and assist the pastor concerning all the interests of the church. They are elected, in some instances, for life; in others, for a limited period, which is usually three years. It is not proper for them to hold meetings of their own, apart from the pastor, as if they were themselves an official board. As a matter of fact, their office is in very many cases more nominal than real.

Naturally enough the churches of a certain territory would desire to be associated together as closely as possible. Accordingly, their pastors and a fixed number of messengers, or delegates, may meet annually for the purpose of advising and consulting concerning matters of general interest. Such a meeting is a Baptist Association. Its sessions are for two days or longer. While exercising no control whatever over the churches, it may decline for satisfactory reasons to receive their ministers or delegates, and thus exclude this or that church from its fellowship.

Another society is the State Convention, or General Association. This is a missionary organization. It is entirely independent of the Associations, though these may and sometimes do report to it and work in coöperation with it. Its membership rests chiefly on a monetary basis, being composed of the messengers of contributing churches or societies, and persons who themselves pay a certain amount of money into its treasury.

There is also the Northern Baptist Convention for the North and West, and a similar society, the Southern Convention, for the rest of the country, whose main objects are the promotion of home and foreign missions and of Sunday schools. The meetings of both are held annually.²

¹"In some few churches neither women nor minors have a vote, and perhaps in a large number the younger children are not expected to vote on questions of importance, though they may not by any rule be deprived of the right. It is true, also, that in very many of our churches, perhaps with regret we might say a majority of them, the larger part of the members do not attend the business meetings, and it is practically a fraction of the church which regulates its business concerns." (Dargan, "Ecclesiology," p. 113.)

²Hiscox, "New Directory of Baptist Churches;" Dargan, "Ecclesiology."

In the English Baptist churches baptism is not regarded as an essential condition of admission to the Lord's Supper. Accordingly, the English Baptists—as represented, for example, by such illustrious names as Bunyan, Robert Hall, and Charles H. Spurgeon—admit their brethren of other evangelical churches to commune with them at the Lord's table. It is also true of English Baptists that persons not baptized by immersion are in some instances admitted into church membership, and even elected to high official positions.

Until recently the Baptist churches of the United States have not offered the communion of the Lord's Supper to Christians of other churches. But at the present time there seems to be a strong tendency in the North toward "open communion."

More than most Christian churches, the Baptists, it is evident, regard the forms of worship, of the administration of sacraments, and of church government which seem to have obtained in the New Testament congregations, as binding precedents for all subsequent circumstances and times. But there arose, a century ago, in certain of their congregations, a movement intended to effect a still stricter conformity to New Testament precedents. This movement resulted in the organization of the churches of the Disciples of Christ. Restoration—"to take up things just as the Apostles left them"—has been their watchword.

The Disciples hold that "the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church . . . as the Old Testament was for the worship, the discipline, and government of the Old Testament Church."¹ And in the endeavor to embody this belief in practice, they make it a matter of church order, for example, to refuse to be called by any denominational name—regarding all such names as unscriptural and sectarian; to set forth no "human" creed or confession of faith—distinctly confessing, however, with tongue and pen, the New Testament teaching as they under-

¹"Declaration and Address" of 1809, cited in Gates's "The Disciples of Christ," p. 51.

stand it; to observe the Lord's Supper weekly—quoting, as a determinative reason for this custom, Acts xx. 7, "And upon the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them;" to avoid the use of such titles as "Reverend," making no distinction between ministers and laymen, and calling their ministers "elder" only; to baptize by immersion and on the simple profession of belief in Jesus as the Christ.

It is in pursuance of the same idea that the Disciples propose to copy—shall we not say, rather than imitate?—as closely as possible the form of government that appears in the churches of apostolic times. Their polity is purely congregational. Unlike the Baptists, but like the Presbyterians, they have a plural eldership.¹

The Disciples have a distinct plan and plea for the unification of the churches. Assuming their own faith and order to be the one true interpretation of the New Testament teaching, and hence the one common meeting ground of Christians, they urgently offer it as such.²

6. ESTIMATE OF THE PURELY DEMOCRATIC THEORY OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

The excellences of the congregational polity are manifest.

(1) Its simplicity commends it. Here is nothing complicated or excessive; no undue multiplication of offices and functionaries, of dignities and prerogatives; no hierarchic pomp. All seems unpretentious, primitive, easy of apprehension and approval. It is Christianity most simply and transparently organized. There is little machinery among the stars; and as the planet—to use the

¹"Our [the Baptist] churches have discarded the plurality of elders. It is our custom now, even in very large churches, to have only one active pastor, or elder, while it seems clear that in the New Testament churches, certainly the larger ones, there were several or even many elders." (Dargan, "Ecclesiology," p. 115.)

²Article on "The Disciples of Christ" by F. D. Power, in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia; Gates, "The Disciples of Christ," in *The Story of the Churches Series*; Moore, "The Plea of the Disciples of Christ."

favorite Congregational figure—revolves serenely about the two foci of its elliptical orbit, so the separate Christian congregations may be imagined as moving steadily and strongly about their two central principles of autonomy and fellowship.

(2) Dispensing with the use of general governmental powers, it renders the arbitrary or tyrannical misuse of such powers impossible.

(3) It trusts the people. No conceivable right or privilege is denied them. No conceivable responsibility is spared them. They must even, as separate congregations, choose or frame their own confession of faith. And it is good to be trusted. What more effectually conduces to trustworthiness? Democracy is educative; responsibility broadens and strengthens the mind; activity promotes growth.

I have heard it given, as a bit of personal experience, by a missionary of long residence in the Chinese Empire: "Men will never be saved by being talked down to." It is a principle of wide and varied application. People will never be elevated in thought and character by being governed, either in Church or State, as infants or other incapables.

That the entire membership of a church, then, should be constantly called upon to deal with important practical, and even scriptural and theological, questions, suits men's mental constitution. It tends to give simplicity, richness, and variety to their religious life. It may reasonably be expected to make them more intelligent, self-reliant, interested, efficient. "Therefore," says with truth a Congregational writer, "we found schools and colleges almost as soon as our church spires rise heavenward."

Now it is true that the American Protestant churches may be said to be, almost without exception, largely democratic in government. But in congregationally governed churches the democracy being direct, or pure, and not simply, as in the other churches, representative, its proper individualizing effect will be most notable.

(4) It encourages the sense of the headship of Christ over the congregation, and of immediate relation to him. Mediation and

authority are here reduced to the lowest point. Christ is King. This human democracy, therefore, when the truest confession of it is made, proves to be a Divine monarchy.

(5) It is promotive of fellowship and the exercise of spiritual gifts. It makes the church a body not of baptized persons but of Christian believers organized indeed for self-government, but also for mutual instruction, admonition, edification—as far as possible in its nature from a body of clergymen monopolizing all powers and offices.¹ The weekly conference meeting or some similar form of fellowship is developed. There is prayer and speech concerning the Christian life and the advancement of Christ's cause. Thus the ministry of gifts is encouraged. It seems fitting, for instance, that from Congregationalism such a lay evangelist as Dwight L. Moody, representing a great company of lay workers that have since arisen, should have gone forth.

Yet there is another side to the question.

(1) Simplicity is good; but it should not be confused with a lack of differentiation. It is true that "there is little machinery among the stars," but it is equally true that, so far as appears, the stars have very few things to do. Their functions are not nearly so numerous, for example, as those of the human body; and the body would be crippled in its activities by the loss of any one of the many organs with which it has been endowed. So likewise would a perfectly constituted church. It is neither excessively nor inadequately organized.

(2) Suffrage is not an inherent but an acquired right. Properly speaking, it belongs to those who are competent to exercise it well, and to no others. It will not be maintained, therefore, that all church members, experienced and inexperienced, strong-

¹"Congregationalism has built into its very being, built in by vital processes of nutrition and growth, as food is built into the fabric of muscle and bone, a special development of the great New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as the illuminer, guide, and ruler of redeemed souls." (Ladd, "Principles of Church Polity," p. 45.)

mined and weak-minded, worthy and unworthy, old and young, or even all members of mature age, have the right to vote on the often difficult questions of ecclesiastical government, creed, and discipline.

But even if for the sake of argument such a right be conceded, would it not better in many instances be waived in favor of chosen representatives? In the civil community the majority of men are more competent to select suitable lawmakers than to make their own laws. Hence, while it has been discovered that men are best governed when permitted as far as possible to govern themselves, it has also been discovered that they are best governed through representatives rather than by their own direct vote. And why should the case be radically different in the ecclesiastical community? To make the collective membership of a church legislators and judges is not necessarily to set the pyramid upon its base.

In brief, the question is that of a choice of rulers. Where shall we locate the direct supreme authoritative rulership? In each particular congregation, whether it be large or small, spiritually enlightened or unenlightened, literate or illiterate, mainly composed of men or women or children? in a council of select representatives of many churches? in a single supreme overseer? Where is the larger competency and the larger freedom from disturbing influences likely to be found?

As to spiritual despotism, it is, to be sure, no phantom of an agitated brain, but an imminent possibility that must be faithfully guarded against—a possibility that in numberless cases becomes unquestionable fact. But the despotism of a pure democracy, whether it embrace a half million or only a half-score of voters, is no less real and no more tolerable than that of a conciliar government.

Congregationalism, it has been said, will not reach its golden age till men are made ready for it: it is "preëminently the polity of perfect men, and it cannot do its perfect work until there be perfect men." But meantime! In the problem of the perfecting of humankind, expediency and adaptation are certainly not neg-

ligible factors. And while the form of government must rest on principles, it is not itself a principle. Let it be adjusted, therefore, to men as they are, so as the better to help them become what they are to be. This, we may hope, rather than any more ideal organizing, will hasten the millennial day of "perfect men."

(3) The lack of centralized authority is unfavorable to large aggressive enterprises. True, a great work of evangelization, at home and abroad, may be done through the simple fellowship of the churches; but a greater work will be done through such a fellowship under a strongly unified administration.¹

(4) There are certain dangers, it will generally be admitted, to which the congregational form of government is somewhat specially inviting. One is the danger of vagaries in doctrine and usage. Another is the minister's danger of becoming too much the creature of his congregation, instead of their ruler, guide, and leader, according to the appointment of Christ.

¹"Perhaps it would not be too much to say that the crowning reproach of the Baptists as a people, and their most conscientiously recognized fault, is their lack of efficiency as a whole. Their idle resources are a cause of keen mortification to the most intelligent among them. . . . Now, the effectiveness of the Baptist churches, like other things, is a matter of parts and a whole; for it vitally depends on the proper relations of these parts to each other. No thoughtful Baptist can fail to see that here lies the principal weakness of our denomination. Some of our opponents do not hesitate to charge this upon our independent church polity; but surely, believing as we do that this polity is of divine appointment and of perpetual obligation, we cannot admit that the New Testament method is at fault." (Dargan, "Ecclesiology," pp. 142, 143.) Apparently the author would recognize the need of some centralization of authority for the promotion of the efficiency of the churches, did not his belief that the congregational economy of the New Testament is a binding precedent, forbid the idea.

"The maintenance by local churches of entire freedom from ecclesiastical organization with responsibility or authority means slow growth as compared with that of organized denominations; and the controlling impulse of Christians in our time to evangelize the world makes the sacrifice of aggressive strength through remaining a loose aggregation of federated churches seem a very large cost for preserving unmodified our historic polity. Yet it may be that there is a quality of Christian character which can be preserved only through such a polity, and that this quality is worth the cost." (*The Congregationalist*, July 27, 1907.)

(5) The lack of connectionalism and centralization has a tendency to promote an unduly sensitive spirit of independence in the churches.¹

(6) It may well be doubted, simply on general principles of freedom and authority, that the functions of representative assemblages of the churches should be limited to the giving of counsel. For is not too little authority as really hurtful as too much? It is good to be trusted, it is good to rule oneself; but it is also good to be commanded and to obey. Here again the analogy of civil government is not without its significance. That local churches should agree to be directed, in certain matters of general concern, by the will of a representative body duly restricted by constitutional safeguards, would seem to violate no right, to jeopard no interest, and to be promotive of a steadier, more aggressive, more uniform and unifying government.

¹"The curse of Congregationalism, which not only hinders it from fulfilling its mission, but threatens its very existence, is 'parochial selfishness.' This is by no means confined to the Congregational churches, but is a graver danger under our free polity. Each church, being sufficient unto itself, thinks only of itself. It resents even advice from other churches, as an interference with its supreme authority." (Heermance, "Democracy in the Church," p. 121.)

II.

THE CONCILIAR IDEA.

MEN believe in government by others as truly as in self-government. Claiming freedom, they trust themselves freely to authority. Both faiths are instinctive and universal, representing innate needs of the soul. Both are exemplified in the feeling of the child toward the parent—the home their birthplace and chief training school. Both are found in all conditions of life, in all positions whether public or private, in all states of society, under every form of civil administration. If ever men fought for self-government, it was the Spartans who died at Thermopylæ; yet the monument above their dust bore the inscription: “O stranger, tell it at Lacedæmon that we lie here in obedience to her laws.” If ever a woman knew the power of self-command, it was Susannah Wesley; yet when, in her husband’s absence, she was holding religious meetings which he had been led, as rector of the parish, to disapprove of, she wrote to him not to desire but to command her to desist—“send me your positive command.” And it is certain that the followers of her most illustrious son, in their voluntary obedience to him, keeping the rigid rules of the United Society, offered a thousandfold illustration of the same principle.

With respect to the Church as well as the State, both these principles of government by others and self-governing freedom are sanctioned in the New Testament. Concerning the State it is said, “Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers:”¹ concerning the Church it is said: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them.”² On the other hand, it is taught in the New Testament that men shall act for themselves in freedom, according to their own judgment and conscience, even though contrary to civil or ecclesiastical law: “They will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge

¹Rom. xiii. 1.

²Heb. xiii. 17.

you; yea, and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake;"¹ "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day."²

Moreover, it is the teaching of the New Testament that the authority of the rulers whom the people must obey and submit to is intrusted to them by the Supreme Ruler. And it is only when these "ministers of God," in Church or State, so abuse their trust as to enforce enactments in violation of his declared will, that men, acting in freedom, may rightfully disobey them. Such disobedience, therefore, is itself under law. It is obedience to the law of God: "We must obey God rather than men;"³ "Not being without law to God, but under law to Christ."⁴ If a man should "die unto the law"—unto any law, civil or ecclesiastical—it must be that he may "live unto God."⁵

Now as regards these ultimate principles of freedom and authority, all reasonable men agree. It is in the adjustment of them either to other that difficulties start up. How much freedom, or self-government, and how much authority, or government by others, in any particular case—that is the problem. None but an anarchist would approve the sad fanatics at the rise of the Lutheran Reformation, whose claim Calvin honors with a refutation, and assert that obedience to any civil magistrate is "incompatible with the perfection of that obedience accompanying the gospel of Christ."⁶ But, on the other hand, few will be found in intellectual sympathy with the attitude described by John Henry Newman when he says: "I loved to act as feeling myself in my bishop's sight as if it were the sight of God."⁷ These are the extremes—lawlessness and blind subservience. But always to find the golden mean, in the present state of human faculties and temperaments, is clearly impossible.

In the Church, while Congregationalism stands for the largest possible freedom, Presbyterianism lays a heavy stress upon law.

¹Matt. x. 17, 18.²Col. ii. 16.³Acts v. 29.⁴1 Cor. ix. 21.⁵Gal. ii. 19.⁶"Institutes," IV., xx. 5.⁷"Apologia" (1897), p. 50.

Congregationalism commits the whole government of the congregation into the hands of the people; Presbyterianism, into the hands of a select body of men holding a lifetime office. Congregationalism will have only churches associated in a sisterhood to which not a feather's weight of authority is intrusted; Presbyterianism organizes many separate churches into one united Church, placing them all under a common and graded presbyteral control.

I. THE CALVINIAN POLITY.

Waiving for the present the question of its apostolic origin, let us look at this system of government as it was set forth by the great Genevan theologian and reformer.¹

Calvin was no Independent. He was far more a believer in law than in liberty. Discipline and restraint were to his mind very sacred words. "If he had lived in the Middle Ages," says Dr. Philip Schaff, "he might have been a Hildebrand or an Innocent III." Perhaps so. Nevertheless, the John Calvin of the sixteenth century was no prelatist. Himself as to political opinion an aristocrat and as to ecclesiastical rank only a layman, he chose for the Church a middle way equally removed from prelacy and from Independency. He would make church rulers of chosen laymen side by side with ministers. While magnifying authority, he would have the people represented, at least to some extent, in the seat of authority.

But no autonomous congregations: the Church must be one. And Calvin's gifts were constructive—those of a theologic and ecclesiastic upbuilder. In the matter of government, Luther was more successful in the destructive; Calvin, in the constructive. Luther with his fiery energy agitated, Calvin with his instinct of order crystallized. So, in opposition to the Roman hierarchy, there issued from his hand a strong, compact, and reasonable form of ecclesiastic administration, which claimed to rest on the foundation of the Hebrew Lawgiver and the Apostles, and was

¹Compare pp. 224-227.

not long in proving its adaptiveness and efficiency throughout a great breadth of Christendom.

Shall we sketch the Calvinian polity as it is presented in the "Institutes of the Christian Religion?" The government of the Church is of Divine ordering,¹ absolutely necessary,² and entirely distinct from civil polity;³ the ordinary or permanent officers of the Church are four—namely, the Pastor, the Teacher (for example, Hermas or Justin Martyr or a modern professor of theology),⁴ the Lay-elder, and the Deacon.⁵ These officers should be elected at a meeting held under the presidency of the Pastor;⁶ they should be ordained by one or more Pastors, with the laying on of hands;⁷ the judicatory of a church, to which its discipline is committed, should consist of the Pastor and Lay-elders;⁸ the civil government must directly promote the interests of religion and punish offenses against it.⁹

Under these guiding principles Calvin wrought out in detail the organization of reformed Christianity in Geneva. There were two governing bodies: (1) The Venerable Company, which consisted of ministers and theological professors only, and had charge of purely ecclesiastical matters—such, for example, as the preparation of candidates for the ministry, and their ordination to office; (2) The Consistory, or Presbytery, made up of ministers and lay elders, whose function was the administration of discipline. This court could inflict only ecclesiastic penalties.

¹"We must now treat of the order which it has been the Lord's will to appoint for the Church." (Institutes, IV., iii. 1.)

²"For neither the light and heat of the sun, nor any meat and drink, are so necessary to the nourishment and sustenance of the present life, as the apostolical and pastoral office is to the preservation of the Church in the world." (*Ibid.*, IV., iii. 2.)

³*Ibid.*, IV., xi. 1.

⁴"A teacher or doctor is of most excellent use in schools and universities; as of old in the schools of the prophets and at Jerusalem, where Gamaliel and others taught as doctors." ("Form of Presbyterian Church Government.")

⁵Institutes, IV., iii. 9.

⁶*Ibid.*, IV., iii. 15.

⁷*Ibid.*, IV., iii. 16.

⁸*Ibid.*, IV., xi. 6.

⁹*Ibid.*, IV., xx. 9.

But it could deliver offenders into the hands of the Council, which was a civil court for the infliction of civil penalties.

Both Council and Consistory were inquisitorial tribunals. It was a part of their business, by house-to-house visitations and otherwise, to search closely into the moral and religious life of the people, and bring them to punishment for delinquencies. But the extreme rigor of their discipline brought the whole system into discredit and defeated its object.

As to the part of the people in the government of the Genevan Church, it was very small. They were called upon to confirm the election of the ministerial members of the Venerable Company and the Consistory; that was all. Practically the government seems to have been that of an oligarchy.

In the Institutes, as just said, Calvin advocates for the Church a spiritual polity "entirely distinct from the civil polity." But as a matter of fact the two polities were not kept distinct in the church as it was organized in Geneva. For the pastors were supported at the public expense, and the city magistrates must elect (out of their own number) the lay elders of the Consistory, and must confirm all nominations to pastoral charges. The State was to be a Christian State, and as such must be incorporated with the Church, giving it governmental and financial support, and including all citizens in the church membership. At the same time the Church must maintain its own supremacy in matters of doctrine and morals, and make authoritative use of the State to enforce discipline. This was about the nature of the alliance between these two divine institutions in Geneva. It was more of the Old Testament than of the New, more Mosaic than apostolic.¹ It called for civil punishments—imprisonment, whipping,

¹"It does not follow that because a Jewish king, as God's viceroy, was bound to punish idolatry, a Christian government has a right to suppress by force what it conceives to be religious error. When it can be shown that God has delivered to any Christian state a law prescribing the manner in which he is to be worshiped, and made that law *part of the civil constitution* of the state, appointing the magistrate his deputy to execute its provisions, the argument from Jewish polity may stand; but not until then." (Litton, "The Church of Christ," p. 92, n.)

death—for real or supposed religious offenses. Inevitably it led to religious persecution. And here was one element of un wisdom which brought forth a plentiful harvest of like nature, as always, with the seed sown, in the Calvinian polity. It was not wholly impatience or bitterness in John Milton to describe the dominant presbyters of his time as “new forcers of the conscience.”

The Church of Geneva became a model, in its main features, for most of the Protestant churches of the age. On the Continent, in Great Britain, in the United States—in all the Reformed¹ and the Presbyterian Churches—it has been followed, not however without various adaptive changes, unto the present day.

Calvinism even won its way, under the Protectorate, a hundred years after its organization in Geneva, to supremacy in the English Church. While its doctrines found embodiment in the Westminster Confession (they were already, moderately expressed, in the Thirty-Nine Articles), its polity was established by Parliament; and thus it became for a time the dominant form of ecclesiastical government.

2. FORMS OF AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN POLITY.

But more particularly, what is Presbyterian government at the present time? Taking “the Presbyterian Church in the United States” (Southern General Assembly) as the type, let us make note of some of its more important features.

The ordinary and permanent officers of the Church, by whom its whole government is administered, are ministers of the gospel, ruling elders, and deacons.

There is no gradation of orders in the ministry: the one ministerial ordination confers exactly the same authority upon all its recipients—namely, to preach, to administer the sacraments, to pronounce the benediction, and to ordain.

¹Out of the Reformed Churches of Europe have arisen, through migration, the “Reformed [Dutch] Church in the United States” and the “Reformed [German] Church in America.” Their government is Presbyterian.

License to preach is given by the Presbytery, after a literary and theological examination, and the licentiate becomes thus a probationer for the ministry. On the acceptance of a call to the pastorate of a congregation, he is ordained.

Conjointly with the minister, who is termed a teaching elder, the ruling elders are the rulers of each local church. They are elected by the people, and ordained by the pastor with the laying on of the hands of the Session. Their number is determined by each congregation for itself. The office is not for a prescribed time, but perpetual.¹

Deacons have the management of the temporal affairs of the church, and especially the care of the poor. They take no part in government, nor in the administration of the Lord's Supper. Like the ruling elders, they are elected by the people and ordained by the pastor with the laying on of the hands of the Session, and they hold their office for life. But both elders and deacons may be deposed for heresy, immorality, or unacceptableness, by the Session.

Both elders and deacons must signify their acceptance of the doctrinal standards of the Church, which are the Westminster Confession and the Catechisms—though this is not required of communicants—and their approval of its government and discipline.

The governing bodies, or courts, are four in number—namely, the Session, the Presbytery, the Synod, the General Assembly.

The Session is the congregational court. It is composed of the pastor, who is *ex officio* its moderator, and the ruling elders. In case of a tie, the moderator has the casting vote. A meeting of the Session may be called at any time by the pastor, and must be called when requested by any two ruling elders or ordered by the Presbytery. Or, during a vacancy in the pastorate, it may be called by any two ruling elders.

The Session has original jurisdiction over church members. By its vote only can members be received into the church, suspended, dismissed, excommunicated, or restored. It must devise and execute plans for the prosperity of the church. It may conduct a sessional visitation of the membership; it has general charge of public worship and of Sunday-school and missionary work; it may call congregational meetings—for example, for the election of a pastor—over which the moderator shall preside.

The next higher court to the session is the Presbytery. It is composed of all the ministers, either with or without pastoral charges, and one ruling elder, within a certain prescribed territory. The elders are appointed by the various sessions. If a congregation have more than one pastor, it is entitled to be represented in presbytery by a corresponding number of ruling elders; and, on the other hand, if two or more congregations have but a single pastor, the united congregations are represented by a single ruling elder—the design being to make the number of ministers and of ruling elders equal.

A call to a pastoral charge is offered by the whole congregation convened

¹The Northern General Assembly has authorized the election of elders for a term of years—instituting thus the "rotary eldership."

for the purpose. Such a call must be sent to the Presbytery, and placed by the presbytery in the hands of the minister or the probationer to whom it is addressed. If he accept it, the Presbytery, after a confession of his faith shall have been made in the presence of the congregation that has called him, and mutual pledges given by himself and the people, shall ordain him, if he be a probationer, by the laying on of their hands, and install him as pastor; or, if already ordained, he shall be simply installed. The dissolving of a pastoral relation must also be done by the Presbytery, and may be done at the request of either the pastor or the congregation.

In the case of ministers, the Presbytery is the court of original jurisdiction, and may suspend, depose, or excommunicate them. Some of its other powers are to organize new churches, to unite or divide existing churches, and to report the state of religion within bounds to the Synod and the General Assembly, year by year. Its stated meetings are semiannual.

Above the Presbytery is the Synod. It consists of all the ministers and one ruling elder from each church within its territory, which must comprise at least three presbyteries.

The Synod has no original jurisdiction over either church members, ruling elders, or ministers. It unites or divides presbyteries, or forms new ones, as occasion may demand, and exercises a general superintendence over the two lower courts and the congregations.

The highest in this series of judicatories is the General Assembly. It is made up of commissioners, who must be ministers and ruling elders in equal numbers, chosen, according to a certain ratio of representation, by the presbyteries.

The General Assembly gives advice and instruction in cases referred to it for such purposes, acts as the agent of correspondence with other Christian denominations, determines the formation and boundaries of synods, decides controversies concerning doctrine and discipline, and "constitutes the bond of unity, peace, and correspondence among all its congregations and courts."

This ecclesiastical system, then, is that of a *unified representative government by teaching and ruling elders*. From Session to General Assembly, elders only are appointed to rule. Of these, the lay elders (ruling elders) of the Session are elected by the congregation; and after that, the people have no voice whatever in the government, whether in Session, Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly.

The governing bodies—Session, Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly—are called courts on the ground that Christ is the one lawgiver of the Church; that his laws are set down in Holy Scrip-

¹Book of Church Order in the Presbyterian Church of the United States; Hodge, "What Is Presbyterian Law?"

ture; that the authority of governing bodies, accordingly, is limited to the interpretation and application of these laws, and to making such special regulations as are conformable to them. It is "ministerial and declarative" only.

Not, indeed, that the whole form of government for the Church is presented in the Scriptures, so that no office or organization may lawfully be created except such as are there prescribed. This extreme view, though advocated by some, is plainly impracticable, and has never gained wide acceptance.¹ But there are certain fundamental principles of church polity, it is believed, that are authoritatively taught in the Scriptures, and must therefore be followed.

These principles are (1) the parity of the ministry, (2) the right of the people to a part in the government, and (3) the unity of the Church through the subjection of a part to the whole. These three ideas in combination, accepted as New Testament principles—as the three great lines of church construction traced by the Divine Architect—are distinctive of Presbyterianism.

3. SOME SIGNIFICANT PRESBYTERIAN BELIEFS.

It may not be amiss also to mark with a note of emphasis some of the more significant beliefs that have taken form in connection with the fundamental Presbyterian idea.

(1) *The identity of the Church under the Old and the New Covenant.* In the household of Abraham ecclesiastical organization began, "with the bond of a covenant and the seal of a sacrament;" and through the elders of Israel it was passed on to the Christian presbyterate, in which it shall be perpetuated unto the end of time. "Catholic and universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law)," the Church, though existing in divers imperfect forms, is, through both dispensations and all ages, one and the same.²

¹See p. 536.

²This idea is implied in several phrases of the Confession of Faith, and is unequivocally set forth by Presbyterian theologians.

"The Christian Church is not to be contemplated as another [than that of the Patriarchal and the Hebraic era] and independent organization: such

Stressing this Old Testament truth so strongly, Presbyterianism is inclined to make the Old Testament Scriptures generally more prominent, both in its polity and in its teaching, than do the other evangelical churches.

(2) *Infant church membership.* The ecclesiastical covenant made with Abraham included the children of every succeeding generation within its provisions; and the New Covenant, which is essentially like unto it, nowise "different in substance," does the same. Not the individual, but the family, which in its nature is organically one, offers the true unit of church membership. Accordingly the "visible Church" is described in the Confession of Faith as consisting of "all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, and of *their children*."¹

Infants of Christian parents, therefore, are entitled to baptism, the sign and seal of the divine covenant, and to the initial church membership into which it admits them. They are subjects of the nurture, watch-care, and discipline of the Church, and must be adnuttred to the full privileges of membership as soon as by the

a conception severs at a stroke the vital ties which bind the Old Testament and the New into living unity, robs prophecy of all significance, and renders the Divine dealing with mankind prior to the incarnation an inexplicable mystery." (Morris, "Theology of the Westminster Symbols," p. 615.)

And the presbyterate, believed to be "the ecclesiastical institute" of all ages, is taken as the external form and sign of this identity: "The unity of the Church, through all dispensations identical, needs a living institute as well as a canonical word to thread her form through all generations. None but the office of presbyter can do this. The patriarchal, the Levitical, the Christian, as chief, the Greek, the Latin, the Reformed, in lines of subdivision, have all thus far had the elder, of some name, as an integral factor of government in some degree, and the presumption is fair that the Angel of the covenant is with this office till the end of the world." (McGill, "Church Government," p. 230.)

¹"Church membership is the birthright of all who are born of Christian parents. This Christian birthright is recognized and confirmed in the baptism of infants. We say 'the baptism of infants,' not 'infant' baptism; because the latter phrase sanctions the popular error that there are two kinds of baptism, and that the ordinance of baptism as administered to infants is not in the full sense of the word a sacrament, but only a ceremony of consecration." (Van Dyke, "The Church: Her Ministry and Sacraments," p. 74.)

grace of God they are enabled to make a personal profession of faith in Christ.

(3) *Courts in gradation.* The session may receive or exclude church members; the presbytery may unite or divide congregations; the synod, presbyteries; the general assembly, synods. The records of the session are reviewed by the presbytery; those of the presbytery, by the synod; those of the synod, by the general assembly. The appeal of the session is to the presbytery; that of the presbytery, to the synod; that of the synod, to the general assembly.

If the decision of any one of the lower courts should prove unsatisfactory, there is a larger and higher to which the case may be submitted. The humblest lay member of the Church has the right of an appeal from an adverse decision of the session, through each successive court, up to the general assembly, the highest of all.

Besides, by such an ascending series of judicatories, the oneness of the body ecclesiastic is made actual and visible. Not only local congregations but one far-extended Church is organized, there being "the same power in every tribunal that is in any tribunal, whilst the power of the greater part is over the power of the smaller part."

(4) *Catholicity.* Presbyterian organization, it is held, though necessary to a formally perfect church, is not necessary to a true church. The various Presbyterian denominations, therefore, seek to live in practical and cordial fellowship with all other evangelical communions. Holding faith above form, and discriminating between essential and non-essential truths, they offer the hand of brotherly coöperation to any religious body whose heart is as their heart concerning Christ the King.

4. ESTIMATE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN POLITY.

Is the Presbyterian system one of ecclesiastical republicanism? Not if this word be permitted to bear its usual significance. For in republicanism the representative is elected for a limited time—a year or a term of years—and so may be changed to suit the

changing views and wishes of his constituency; but the eldership is for life.¹ Calvin has said with reference to the State: "Indeed, if these three forms of government [monarchy, aristocracy, democracy] which are stated by philosophers, be considered in themselves, I shall by no means deny that either aristocracy or a mixture of aristocracy and democracy, far excels all others."² Was not the form of government which he constructed for the Church a "mixture of aristocracy and democracy"—with the former element largely predominating?

The strength of the Presbyterian polity is in its conservatism. A representative conciliar government, it is neither greatly diffused nor greatly concentrated. It avoids extremes—escaping, in one direction, the instabilities of restless or unenlightened popular feeling, and, in the opposite direction, the committal of large governmental power into the hands of a single officer, or even of an exclusively ministerial council. It provides what Isaac Taylor describes, though with some exaggeration, as "that necessary balance of powers, clerical and lay, apart from which the choice must always lie between hierarchical despotism or democratic despotism; that is to say, between an unabated spiritual supremacy or impracticable and ungovernable popular caprice." It is steady, strong, and stable.³

But, like all other systems, Presbyterianism must pay the price of its advantages. Does it not miss the benefit of the people's constant coöperation, on the one hand, and of the quickening and aggressive leadership of individual superintendency, on the other? Let it not die of respectability.

One may reasonably believe that no other system of govern-

¹With the exception noted above, p. 402, n.

²Institutes, IV., xx. 8.

³"Modern Presbyterianism, which, take it for all in all, and through all its fields of labor, is undoubtedly one of the noblest and most fruitful forms of Christian organization. . . . Regarded in general and in all its dimensions, as a Church organization, Presbyterianism is a masterpiece. . . .

"There is in the world no moral ascendancy of any force or forces over national character and life equal to that of Presbyterianism in Scotland. The discipline its churches furnish for the nation is unequalled in its power and thoroughness." (Rigg, "Church Organization," pp. 124, 141, 142.)

ment would have so well suited the prevailing conditions at the time of the Reformation, as the Presbyterian. While setting its orderly senate of rulers and judges over against the hierarchy of Rome, it may be supposed to have committed both to presbyters and to people as large responsibilities as they were ready to accept and discharge. It would hardly be maintained that congregational, or prelatic, or Methodist churches, for example, would have proved as timely. Nevertheless, it does not follow that this notably compact and symmetrical system is equally well suited to other and very different conditions. Therefore its wisdom is shown in not refusing such modifications and additions—the “rotary eldership” and the appointment of deaconesses, for example—as may be demanded by providential calls and opportunities.

III.

THE EPISCOPAL IDEA: PRELATIC, SUCCESSIONAL.

IN Congregationalism the Church is governed by local congregations, each legislating solely for itself—a pure democracy; in Presbyterianism, by elders elected by the people—a modified form of representative, or republican, democracy; in Prelatic Episcopacy, by bishops, in whose election the people may or not take a part—an oligarchy or federation of monarchies.

It is the fundamental principles of prelacy, that to the bishops of the Church has been intrusted, by Christ's own ordinance, all governmental authority. Practically it may be found expedient that they associate with themselves other ministers, or even laymen, in this governing office—and they ought to do what is expedient; but primarily the right of rule inheres in them alone. The will of the bishop, officially declared, is the law of the Church. Accordingly, as a matter not of courtesy but of simple fact, this man is "*Lord Bishop*."

Now the simple episcopal office is a natural and easily justifiable development. Its principle is no other than that of a strong executive. That it should have arisen in the Church is therefore not a matter of surprise. In its primitive form—that of the pastorate of a single congregation—the office, as every one will agree, was inevitable. But its further extension was hardly less so. As congregations multiplied, the demand for unity of doctrine, liturgy, and discipline would be enlarged, so as to call for a more general superintendence—the supervision of a single minister over a number of associated churches. Because it is a person, not a body of persons, a leader and not a legislature, that best satisfies the demand for unity. Thus would arise the diocesan episcopate.¹

¹"For in recent years there has been going on in our [the Congregational] polity a process of development which reminds one, by its inner and almost unconscious necessity, of the natural development of the Episcopate, as

The prototype is found in the New Testament. The Apostles were itinerant general superintendents. Sent forth by their Lord as witnesses of his resurrection and as divinely illumined teachers of his gospel, they also exercised a fatherly care, more or less specific, over the congregations that were gathered here and there through their own and others' ministry. It could hardly have been otherwise. "Besides those things that are without," says the farthest-traveling evangelist of them all, "there is that which presses upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches." We also find Paul associating others with him, tried and able men, as assistants in the work, and leaving them in this or that place—Timothy in Ephesus, Titus in Crete—to ordain elders, to regulate teaching and discipline, to set things in order, in his own absence.

Is it not reasonable, then, to suppose that subsequently to the ministry of the Apostles, the Christian churches, constantly increasing in number and subjected to various perils from without and within, should feel the need of some similar personal oversight? In a word, was the supervision of the churches a peculiar feature of the Apostolate, transient and inimitable—like that of *bearing witness* as men who had "seen the Lord," or that of *inspired interpretation* of the facts of redemption—or was it a service that might be possible and appropriate in the ordinary circumstances of the Church? It was certainly the latter.¹

many historians agree in describing it, in the sub-apostolic Church." (Newman Smyth, "Address to the Episcopal Clergy of Connecticut," 1908.)

"Many Presbyterians feel the inefficiency of the Presbytery very keenly, and are prepared to advance to the permanent moderator or superintendent. Why not call him bishop? The tendency in the Presbyterian Church is toward such a bishop, who will give the Presbytery an executive head and make it more efficient." (C. A. Briggs, in "Church Reunion," p. 49.)

"It may confidently be affirmed that, where Christianity is not enfeebled by adverse influences, its visible organization will always tend to something of an episcopal form, however much the name of episcopacy may be repudiated." (Litton, "The Church of Christ," p. 314.)

¹"In modern Congregationalism something of this work of oversight and ministerial appointment has been managed by the home missionary Superintendents of the various states, generally with assistants working under them. . . . We might call them diocesan 'apostles.' Or, if you please, bishops,

Let us not ignore, in the study of ecclesiastical origins, the analogy of Church and State. In all forms of civil government, whether crude or highly developed, whether autocratic or free—with no exceptions that need be noted—administrative officers appear whose functions correspond, in a true and distinct sense, to those of the episcopate in various Christian churches. They are needed; they come to be because they must be. It has been taught, indeed, that the Church, being a supernatural institution, is out of all such correspondence with the State, which is human and natural.¹ But the Church too is human and natural, as well as divine; and the resemblances on which the governmental analogy rests are by no means factitious or superficial.

I. THE APOSTOLIC AND THE SACERDOTAL IDEA OF BISHOPS.

When, however, the question is asked, whether the rise and persistence of the episcopate be a regrettable course of events—whether it shall be regarded as development or excrescence—the answer will have to take cognizance of a certain obvious distinction. It will have to recognize the distinction between the pure apostolic idea of general visitation or superintendence, and the accretions that have encumbered and corrupted it in later times. What accretions? Those that are represented by the claim to apostolic succession and sacerdotal power. The opinion, either hardened into a dogma or practically embodied in ecclesiastical canons, that from the days of the Apostles until now an unbroken line of ordinations to the episcopal office by the imposition of hands is necessary to the Church's existence—to describe the rise and prevalence of this assumption as regrettable would be to use an extremely inadequate word. It has been "branding instead of beauty," not development but disaster. The

presiding over a definite territory but with only a moral authority. . . . Just what is to become of this moral episcopate in the next few years it is not possible to predict. The tendency seems to be to make the Superintendency an elective office, with a general supervision over all the churches, larger as well as smaller." (Heermance, "Democracy in the Church," pp. 129, 130.)

¹McTyeire, "Catechism of Church Government," p. 49.

difference between the episcopal idea as exemplified in the first age of the Church by the Apostle of the Gentiles or in modern Christianity by Francis Asbury, and that which was exemplified by a Leo the First or an Archbishop Laud, is the difference between a Christly pastoral care and the over-lordship of a quasi-sacramental authority.

But the office itself cannot be fairly held responsible for the perversions which it has suffered. To believe in prayer is not to accept the fancy of incantation; to believe in the sacraments is not to accept baptismal regeneration or transubstantiation; to believe in the presbyterate is not to accept the priesthood; and in like manner to believe in the episcopate is not to accept ecclesiastic monarchism? Why reject a great and resourceful office because of its abuses—throwing out the child with the bath? The wisdom of a modern Israel's cry for a king—"that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles"—depends upon "the manner of the king that shall reign." What claim will he make? with what power shall he be clothed?

The Reformers rejected apostolic succession. Denying the infallibility of both papal and conciliar decrees, and taking the New Testament as their final court of appeal, they gained such knowledge of the Church as made all autocratic or sacerdotal conceptions of it impossible. As they understood Christianity, a church is a local congregation of Christ's followers under the ministration of his word and sacraments, acknowledging him as the only Lord and Saviour: *the* Church is the whole number of Christ's followers under whatever diverse forms of organization. That in order to be a member of a Christian church one must receive the sacraments at the hands of a priest who had been ordained by a bishop whose own ordination might be traced back to the apostle Peter or some other of the Twelve, was no part of the Reformers' faith. It was no part of the Christianity which they felt themselves called to proclaim and organize. It was not to them believable on any ground, whether of reason or history or New Testament teaching. Consequently they held themselves at liberty to retain or to discontinue the episcopal office, accord-

ing to their best judgment of the circumstances and needs of different communities. As a matter of fact, it was discontinued except in those countries—Denmark and Sweden, for instance—in which the king and not the Christian teachers and ministers took the leading part in the reorganization of the Church.

German Lutheranism might have perpetuated in its churches the historic line of bishops and ordinations had it so desired; for as many as three Roman Catholic bishops were numbered among its adherents. But it set no value upon such a succession, and made no use of it. Calvin had no bishop appointed for little Geneva—unless indeed he himself, though a *layman*, be regarded as such an officer. Nor could he find any episcopacy in the New Testament except the ministerial oversight of the Apostles. He did, however, express the judgment that in large countries a good purpose might be served by the episcopal office; and similar views may be quoted from Beza and from Bucer. John Knox provided for bishops, or "superintendents," ten in number, for the Church of Scotland.¹ But Calvin and Knox and the communions which they represented believed no more than did Luther in a tactual or sacerdotal line of bishops authorized under the hands of the Apostles to preside over the presbyters and govern the Church.

2. SOME HISTORIC PECULIARITIES OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

The reorganization of the English Church was distinctly different from that of any other. For here the Reformation was accompanied by a politico-ecclesiastic movement that had no vital connection with it. Henry VIII. was in no real sense a Protestant; but neither was he a loyal and peaceable Romanist. He

¹In the "First Book of Discipline" of the Scotch Kirk it is written concerning the Superintendents, who were to be subject to the General Assembly: "These men must not be suffered to live as your idle bishops have done heretofore, neither must they remain where glially they would, but they must be preachers themselves, and such as may not make long residence in any place till their kirks be planted and provided of ministers or, at least, of readers" (Briggs, "American Presbyterianism," p. 41, n.) Cf Brown, "Life of Knox," BK. II, pp. 131, 132.

must be sovereign of England and do his own pleasure in Church as well as in State, even though it should be necessary to set at defiance the authority of the bishop of Rome. The chief men of the kingdom seemed for the most part also favorable to the assertion of this independence of Rome. At all events they easily fell in with the will of the king; and accordingly through the action of Parliament the papal supremacy was renounced, and the king himself made supreme governor of the English Church.

Now the relation of the bishops to the king was close and significant. It was the relation afterwards expressed with forceful extravagance in that curt maxim (the "war cry" of the Stuarts): "No bishops, no king." As rulers of the national Church under its royal headship, they must be faithful supporters of the Crown, while the sovereign on his part vouchsafed them the security of his favor and protection. Besides, when people are accustomed to the episcopal monarchy in the Church, they will take more kindly and naturally to monarchy in the State. The English bishop, then, must not be displaced. So the reformed doctrines, which had already begun to make headway in the kingdom, found the episcopacy firmly established, a national as well as an ecclesiastic institution; and as they found it so they suffered it to remain.¹

The ordering of the English Church at the Reformation, like much other English legislating, was in the way of compromise. This would naturally prove favorable to freedom of thought and speech; and as a matter of fact there is great freedom of speech enjoyed in this Church on all questions, religious, theological,

¹"Sith, therefore, by the fathers and first founders of this commonwealth it hath, upon great experience and forecast, been judged most for the good of all sorts, that as the whole body politic in which we live should be for strength's sake a threefold cable, consisting of the king as supreme head over all, of peers and nobles under him, and of the people under them; so likewise that in this conjunction of states the second wreath of that cable should, for important respects, consist as well of lords spiritual as temporal. Nobility and prelacy being by this means twined together, how can it possibly be avoided but that the tearing away of the one must needs exceedingly weaken the other, and by consequence impair greatly the good of all?" (Hooker, "Ecc. Polity," Bk. VII., sec. 18 (4)).

and ecclesiastic. Accordingly different views are taught by its theologians, now as heretofore, with respect to the origin and proper authority of the episcopal office.

It is not with these variant views of the ecclesiologists, however, that we are just now concerned, but rather with the actually existent forms of the organization. Here, then, is to be found an example of prelatic¹ and successional episcopacy. That is to say, the bishops constitute the supreme order in the ministry, choosing men for ordination to the inferior orders, exercising jurisdiction over them, and so interpreting their own prerogatives as to give no recognition to the ministry of any other communion than those—namely, the Eastern, the Roman, and the Protestant Episcopal—which are regarded as standing in the apostolic succession.

It is true that for a number of years after the renunciation of papal supremacy the dogma of the divine right of bishops was not emphasized in the Church of England; and it is a historic fact that during this period certain men without episcopal ordination were received into its ministry.² But it must be granted that this does not seem to have been in keeping with its law as contained in the Preface of the Ordinal. The opening sentence of this Preface, indeed, which is the same as when first adopted (in 1549), presents no bar to non-episcopal ordinations. It reads as follows: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." Now in this carefully worded assertion there is claimed for the three designated orders

¹Is it necessary to say that the word *prelatic* is here used in no offensive sense? Dean Armitage Robinson has spoken of the office of bishop in the Church of England as "an episcopacy which has long since ceased to be a prelacy" ("The Vision of Unity," p. 13). What he has in mind, I suppose, is the reasonable and brotherly spirit in which the bishops govern their dioceses, rather than the theory of episcopal authority which is prevalent in the English Church. Such a spirit is also characteristic, we may believe, of the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

²See p. 279.

of the ministry only primitiveness, not the exclusive right of ministration in the Church. But the same is not true of the third sentence of the Preface. In this sentence, as it appeared in the Preface of 1549, was the following: "It is requisite that no man (not being at this present Bishop, Priest, or Deacon) shall execute any of them [ministerial functions], except he be called, tried and examined, and admitted, according to the form hereafter following." This would seem to mean that those who were already bishops, priests, or deacons, having been ordained in the Church of Rome or in the Church of England after its severance from Rome (in 1534), should have their orders recognized, and be permitted to exercise ministerial functions in the Church of England; but that all others must be ordained by a bishop according to the form of ordination following.

Why is it, then, that all others were not thus ordained? It has been said, "Because of the exuberance of charity for the Reformed communions of the Continent," or "Because of lax administration of the law and conniving at offenses." However this may be, it seems historically certain that the trend of both teaching and administration in the Church took no account of the law as formulated in the Preface of the Ordinal, and that the contrary teaching when it began, under Bishops Bancroft and Laud, was at first the work of a small party. But it was the work of a very bold party, and finally proved triumphant—and disastrous to Church and State.¹ As Lord Bacon has said concerning it: "The beginnings were modest, but the extremes were violent." It may also be remembered in this connection that in the Church of England there has been from the first an uncommon amount of compromise and of inconsistency between the letter of the law and the practice of its subjects and administrators.

¹"The system pursued by Bancroft and his imitators, Bishops Neile and Laud, . . . was just such as low-born and little-minded men, raised to power by fortune's caprice, are ever fond to pursue. . . . They began preaching the divine right, as it is called, or absolute indispensability, of episcopacy: a doctrine of which the first traces, as I apprehend, are found about

To return for a moment to the third sentence of the Preface. In the year 1662 this sentence was changed by act of Parliament to that which has ever since been retained, as follows: "No man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of England, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, and examined, and admitted thereto, according to the form hereafter following, *or hath had former episcopal consecration or ordination.*" Here the phrase "not being at this present bishop, priest, or deacon" (which of course was no longer appropriate) was substituted by the more explicit language, "or hath had former episcopal consecration or ordination." This phrase, like its predecessor, certainly left no place in the conduct of the public offices of the English Church for ministers with, for example, presbyterial ordination. And in strict accordance with this interpretation of it has been the practice of this Church for the last three hundred years.¹ Thus has the sturdy English Establishment, once in fraternal relations with the great body of evangelic ecclesiasticism, been sundered from it—

A dreary sea now flows between.

the end of Elizabeth's reign. They insisted on the necessity of episcopal succession regularly derived from the Apostles. . . . And as this affected all the Reformed Churches in Europe except their own, . . . they began to speak of them not as brethren of the same faith, united in the same cause, and distinguished only by differences little more material than those of political commonwealths (which had been the language of the Church of England ever since the Reformation), but as aliens, to whom they were not at all related, and as schismatics with whom they held no communion; nay, as wanting the very essence of a Christian society." (Hallam, "Constitutional History of England," Vol. I., ch. vii., pp. 387, 388.)

* 'The First Prayer Book of King Edward VI. (London, recent reprint); "The Anglican Ordinal," Annotated by Bloomfield Jackson, M.A., pp. 17, 18.

It was this same Parliament that, in an Act of Uniformity, forbade any person to "presume to consecrate and administer the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, before he be ordained a priest by Episcopal consecration, on pain of forfeiture for every offense of one hundred pounds." (Neal, "History of the Puritans," Vol. II., p. 240.)

3. AFFINITY OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION AND SACERDOTALISM.

Now the dogma of apostolic succession is closely affiliated with sacerdotalism. One might imagine either of them as existing without the other; but historically they go together.¹ And there is a reason for it in the two dogmas themselves. Because it may well be asked, Why the absolute necessity for this unbroken line of the laying on of hands? Is it a mere formal continuity? On the contrary, must it not, as its justifying explanation, convey some special grace to its recipient? And what is this grace which is given under the bishop's hands in ordination, if not the grace of priesthood? What does it empower the ordinand to do, if not to offer sacrifice, and in his turn to impart a sacramental grace to communicants at the Lord's Supper? So the two ideas united, and the two forms fitted together.

Accordingly we find that in entire accord with the general favor shown by the Church of England, in the Preface of the Ordinal, to the dogma of the apostolic succession, is its distinct and specific favorableness, in the Ordinal and Offices, to sacerdotalism. For the second order of the ministry is here a "priesthood," the presbyter a "priest." "Whether we call it a priesthood, a presbytership, or a ministry, it skilleth not," says Richard Hooker, "although in truth the word *presbyter* doth seem more fit and in propriety of speech more agreeable than *priest* with the drift of the gospel. . . . The Holy Ghost throughout the body of the New Testament making mention of them [ministers] doth not anywhere call them priests." But to many ministers of the Church of England—as many as a third of the whole number, probably—their ministry is conceived of and practiced as a priesthood. They profess to be, in the literal sense of

¹"You may follow the track of the Reformation, and mark how all the churches which took part in that movement, save only the Church of England and a possible fraction of Scandinavian Christendom, forfeited with the episcopate the organic conditions of true sacramental life." (Canon Liddon, *Sermon on Apostolic Labors*, in "Clerical Life and Work," p. 276. Cf. Gore, "Mission of the Church," Lect. I.)

the word, priests. Not the ministration of God's word, but the offering of sacrifice in the Lord's Supper and the mediation of sacramental grace to the people, they regard as the most significant features of their calling. This, they insist, is the article of the standing or falling Church; this is what makes a church—the *priesthood*. And it is for this that a bishop lineally descended from the Apostles is necessary—he alone can confer priestly orders. No Church without a priesthood, no priesthood without episcopal ordination, no episcopal ordination without “apostolic succession.” A line of bishops would be comparatively a small matter were it not that without it there could be no line of priests.¹

Let it be admitted, then, that just as evangelicalism rather than sacerdotalism is in accord with the Articles of Religion, so sacerdotalism rather than evangelicalism is in accord with the Offices and the Ordinal. But it is undoubtedly a strangely incongruous outcome: a man claiming to be known as a successor of the Apostles, and yet bearing the name of priest, which no Apostle, even with Judaism just passing into Christianity, ever bore, and standing to minister at an altar of sacrifice, where no Apostle ever stood.

4. FORMS OF GOVERNMENT IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

This national church, as authorized and established by law, is a clergy-church. The laity as such have no part, either directly or through representation, in its government, and almost none in its work. To borrow the language of civics, they are subjects,

¹*The Living Church*, in a recent editorial utterance, states the case very plainly in connection with a question of Church union: “Thus the real issue is not over the ‘historic episcopate’ but over the historic priesthood. . . . Only a Church with Bishops can secure priests; but unless a Church wants priests, it might better steer clear of Bishops. The ultimate question between Churchmen and Protestants turns upon the priesthood.”

“If the Bishop is lowered [by the Puritans], it is because he is the source of the Priesthood. If the Sacraments are disparaged, it is to sap the very foundation of things sacramental, which derive their being from the office of the Priest.” (Arthur Lowndes, in “Church Reunion,” p. 310.)

not citizens.¹ Neither has the congregation any voice in the selection of its ministers. Pastoral charges are "livings" held by patrons, more than half of whom are private persons, who nominate the pastors, subject to the approval of the diocesan bishop.

No roll of membership is kept in the churches; and it seems difficult to determine who are properly church-members, whether all baptized persons, all who have been confirmed, or all communicants. All baptized persons in the land are claimed as rightfully under the care and government of the Church, though probably more than half of them are affiliated with other Christian communions. There is no moral discipline—"practically none for ministers, confessedly none for private members."²

The bishops of the twenty-four senior sees have seats in the Upper House of Parliament as spiritual lords—the Archbishop of Canterbury ranking as the first peer of the realm. A cathedral (or bishop's) church is governed by a chapter consisting of a dean and (usually four) canons. It is by the cathedral chapter nominally that the bishop is elected, on nomination of the Crown. But permission is not given to elect any other than the royal nominee, and if he be not elected in twelve days the Crown appoints; so that the nomination is final and the election by the chapter meaningless—a mechan-

¹"Hereupon we hold that God's Clergy are a State which hath been and will be, as long as there is a Church upon earth, necessarily by the plain word of God himself; a State whereunto the rest of God's people must be subject, as touching things that appertain to their souls' health." (Hooker, "Ecc. Polity," Bk. III., sec. 11, pp. 333, 334.)

²"The laity, left without work, have almost of necessity remained without zeal." (Westcott, "Social Aspects of Christianity," p. 79.)

³"The cessation of indulgences among us [in the Church of England] is simply coextensive with the cessation of that godly discipline which must exist in every well-ordered church." (Blunt, "Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology," Art. "Indulgences.")

If no other reason could be given for the lack of discipline, the existing relation between Church and State would be sufficient: "But the cause of the decay of moral discipline in our own Church has been a different one—the peculiar relation in which the Church stands to the State. . . . What right had the Church to hamper her liberty to express and enforce by moral discipline on her own members the unchanging law of Christ? . . . No Christian society can be healthy unless there is some obvious means by which those acting in open defiance of Christian law shall forfeit, not the privileges of citizenship, but the privileges of Christian communion." (Gore, "The Mission of the Church," pp. 93, 95, 97.)

ical bow to ecclesiastic antiquity. As to who the appointee shall be, it would seem to depend somewhat upon which political party chances to be in power at the time. Bishops, moreover, are compelled under severe legal penalties to ordain the nominee thus brought before them.¹

Bishops are assisted in the visitation of parishes and in the government of the diocese by archdeacons and rural deans.

There is a series of ecclesiastical tribunals, the highest court of appeals being the sovereign himself in council.

The two legislative bodies of the Church are the Convocations of Canterbury and York. Each of these bodies consists of two houses, an Upper and a Lower—the Upper House being made up of the diocesan bishops, presided over by the archbishop, and the Lower House of archdeacons, deans, and representatives of the lower clergy. These convocations can be convened only under the authority of a writ from the Crown; and their decisions become law only when confirmed by act of Parliament. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the titular head of the Church, but nothing more; its real head is the King of England.

The national Parliament, indeed, is the highest law-making body of the Church. From which order of things it follows that, although laymen are excluded from all ecclesiastical councils, the Church itself is under their supreme control. Not only is the head of the Church, the sovereign of the realm, a layman, but the members of the House of Parliament are, with the exception of the "spiritual lords," either laymen or not churchmen at all. They represent Scotland and Ireland as well as England, and are not chosen—any more than are the senators and congressmen of the United States—with reference to ecclesiastical relations or religious faith. They may be Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, Jews, agnostics.²

¹This mode of episcopal appointment is strongly condemned by prominent English churchmen: "It is quite clear that in the primitive ages the voice of the lay people in the choice, and their 'acclamation' and assent in the ordination of the clergy, whether bishops or priests, were by no means disregarded. . . . It would seem to be alike a corruption of the primitive practice to confine such choice absolutely to the clergy, whether bishop or pope, or to let it fall altogether into the hands of a lay government." (Moberly, "The Administration of the Holy Spirit," p. 199.)

²"The Anglican Ordinal," annotated by Bloomfield Jackson; Articles on the "Church of England" in the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, the Encyclopedia Britannica, and the New International Encyclopedia.

When religious tests were abolished, so that adherents of any religion or of none at all became eligible to seats in the national Parliament, a strange result followed. "Men whose distinctive note was dissent from the Church, were, by a constitutional change which enlarged and benefited the State, invested with legislative authority over the church they dissented from; and men the Church could not truthfully recognize as fully or adequately Christian became, by civil action and on civil grounds, lawgivers for the very

Numerous benevolent institutions, such as hospitals, asylums, and homes for the poor, are generously maintained; and much evangelistic and social work among the poor is done by the Church Army—an institution which owes its origin to the notable example of the Salvation Army of “General” William Booth.

5. EXTENSION OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH TO AMERICA.

The English Church has been extended to the Colonies of England in all parts of the world. In our American Colonies it was planted at an early date of their history. In the oldest of them all, Church and State began together. For the fleet that brought the colonists, in 1607, to the rude riverside in the Virginia wilderness, brought with them the Prayer Book and the Episcopal minister. The building of a house of worship and of the cabins of the people went on side by side; and a few weeks after the landing the Lord’s Supper was celebrated in the first church edifice—“a pen of poles with a sail for a roof.”¹

In Virginia, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, the Carolinas, and Georgia the English Church was established by law. The Colonies were included, during their whole history, in the diocese of the Bishop of London. But his oversight of them was a very “shadowy superintendency”—in name only.² Never did they enjoy the benefit of an episcopal visitation. Hence there

church that refused them recognition.” (Fairbairn, “Catholicism,” p. 288.)

“The most sacred questions of doctrine and morals are not decided in the last resort by the commissioned guardians of the faith, but by accomplished lawyers, who may or may not be Christians. . . . We can indeed defend existing arrangements if we can suppose that St. Paul would have allowed the questions pending between him and the Galatian Judaizers, or the Corinthian deniers of the Resurrection, to be settled by the nearest proconsul.” (Liddon, “Clerical Life and Work,” p. 304.)

¹Cooke, “Virginia,” p. 20.

²It seems to have been a mere accidental circumstance that attached the Colonies to the see of London. “At the first settlement of the country the then Bishop of London had chanced to be a stockholder and a member of council in the ‘Virginia Company.’ This fact gave him a vague, advisory oversight of its affairs. His successors for nearly a century followed his example until it became a prescriptive right of that see. Bishop Compton,

were no ordinations to the ministry and no confirmations;¹ and though the clergy's need of discipline was imperative and notorious,² none was exercised over them. In fact, the ecclesiastical situation was such as to make discipline an impossibility.

Repeated efforts were made to have a bishop consecrated for the Colonies; but all in vain. "For a hundred and seventy-five years," says Dr. S. D. McConnell, "the Church in America was a Japhet in search of a father. The chapter now before us is the story of the long, wearisome, pitiful, despairing effort to obtain that office without which the Church could not live." Obviously either the apostolic idea of church organization, or the apostolic spirit of labor and self-devotion, or both, were lacking. "Friend and foe alike were possessed of the idea"—so we are told—"that the office involved the trappings of worldly estate. All efforts to secure an American bishop involved efforts to secure for him an income of at least a thousand pounds, a large sum in those days."³ And in those same days it came to pass that Francis Asbury went his way throughout the wild Colonies, on horseback or otherwise, five thousand miles a year, infirm in health yet unremitting in episcopal labors, on an annual salary of "at least" eighty dollars.

Nor was it simply the difficulty of providing the bishop's "trappings of worldly estate" that stood in the way. The people, Episcopalians as well as others, were apprehensive lest, if a bish-

in 1703, had it confirmed to him and his successors by an 'Order in Council.' But the supervision which the Bishop of London could give to churches farther away than the heart of Australia now is was worth but little." (McConnell, "History of American Episcopal Church," p. 175.)

¹The first Protestant Episcopal bishop, Dr. Samuel Seabury, was probably, and the second, Dr. William White, was certainly never confirmed. Note that baptized persons could be admitted to the Lord's Supper without confirmation, if they were "ready and desirous to be confirmed."

²"These colonies [Virginia and Maryland particularly] became a refuge and resort for the thriftless and profligate clergy of England, who were glad to escape from their debts and difficulties at home, and whose friends were so happy to get rid of them that they aided in securing for them assured positions and salaries on the distant continent." (Tiffany, "Hist. of the Protestant Episcopal Church," pp. 266, 267.)

³Tiffany, "History of the Episcopal Church," pp. 277, 278.

op were appointed, Parliament might confer upon him such powers—that of holding bishops' courts, for instance—as would infringe upon the liberties of the Colonies.

6. ORGANIZATION OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

When the War of the Revolution was over, the Church of England had ceased to exist in the victorious federated Colonies. What did remain? Only a dispirited remnant of Episcopal congregations, with deserted parishes, dilapidated churches, apathetic or perplexed adherents, and no general government or bond of union.

The movement for bringing the churches together into a general organization was begun in 1782, the same year in which the preliminary treaty of peace between England and the United States was signed. For it was in that year that the rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, Dr. William White (afterwards bishop), issued his pamphlet, "The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered." Dr. White was a believer in the expediency but not in the divine right of episcopacy. He was troubled by no doubt that there could be "a church without a bishop." His position was that of Jewell, Hooker, Hoadly, Cranmer, Usher, and others—may we not say, of the Church of England generally in their day?—as to the divine necessity of episcopal ordination.¹ Accordingly the gist of the proposal made in his pamphlet was that a general convention be held, composed of representatives of the churches, and a presbyter elected as permanent president, who, together with certain other presbyters associated with him, should exercise the functions ordinarily performed by a bishop, including the function of ordination. This, however, was to be regarded as only a temporary arrangement. The intention was to "pro-

¹"So late as 1830, in a letter to his dear friend and son in the gospel, Bishop Hobart, . . . he remarks in a note: . . . 'In regard to the episcopacy, I think that it should be sustained as the government of the Church from the time of the Apostles, but without crimiating the ministry of other churches, as is the course taken by the Church of England.'" (McConnell, "American Episcopal Church," pp. 293, 294.)

cure the succession" as soon as this could conveniently be done. But the proposed plan of government met with opposition, especially in the North, and the acknowledgment by England of American independence soon afterwards promised to open another way out of the difficulty.

Meantime meetings were held—consisting of a few ministers and laymen, or of ministers alone—for the purpose of deliberating on the affairs of the Church, and effecting if possible the desired organization. But with the establishment of the national independence a new obstacle to the securing of an American successional episcopate appeared: the English prelates were prohibited by law from consecrating a bishop without requiring of him an oath of allegiance to the British Crown—which, of course, was out of the question under what had now become a foreign government.

This obstacle, however, was evaded; and not long afterwards it was removed. Dr. Samuel Seabury, an Episcopal pastor in the city of New York, evaded it. Having been selected for the episcopacy at a meeting of a few clergymen in Connecticut, he obtained consecration, in the fall of 1784, at the hands of certain Scotch non-juring bishops at Aberdeen, Scotland; and he was accepted as bishop of Connecticut. Two and a half years afterwards, on February 4, 1787, the legal obstacle having in the meantime been removed by act of Parliament, two other American Episcopal clergymen, Dr. William White and Dr. Samuel Provoost, were consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in Lambeth Chapel, for an independent American Episcopal Church. At a convention held in September, 1789, these three bishops were formally recognized, a Prayer Book adopted, a constitution and canons established; and thus the organization of this new religious body, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, was completed.

7. THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL COMPARED WITH THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

In form of government, especially with respect to the Church's relation to the State and to the rights and responsibilities of the

laity, there is a marked difference between the English and the Protestant Episcopal Church. As to relation to the State, neither the Episcopal nor any other ecclesiastical body could have put forth the effort to gain legal "establishment" in the United States of America, with the slightest hope of success. Nor did any of the various churches make such an effort. Freedom in religion as well as in civil government was the spirit of the young Republic of the West. Both rulers and people, whether Christians or unbelievers, were averse to all alliance of Church and State. And if the less worthy motive of denominational jealousy was ready to bring its pressure to bear in the same direction, it need not be wondered at.

Also as to the rights and responsibilities of the laity, the organizing convention of 1789 made a great step forward. For in that convention the Church decided to admit the laity to a large share in its government. And this too was in accord with the ideas and spirit of the new democratic State under which its lot was cast—as well as with the ideas and spirit of primitive Christianity.¹

Indeed, it is only in a mild sense of the word that the Protestant Episcopal Church may be called prelatie. But it may be described as in government strictly "successional." That is to say, in their attitude toward other churches, the American daughter and the Anglican mother stand side by side. While both are willing to recognize "the Christians of other churches," neither will give any recognition to "the churches of other Christians"—unless, indeed, these be Roman or Orthodox Eastern Christians. Neither will invite ministers of other churches into its pulpits.² Only *priests* have received from Christ the grace which

¹"From government by bishops, themselves the creatures of the king, to government by a convention made up of popularly selected bishops, priests, and laymen, is a tremendous leap. When the convention is composed of men who had been born and reared and had their habits fixed under another ecclesiastical system, the wonder at its success becomes still greater." (McConnell, "History of American Episcopal Church," pp. 265, 266.)

²Is there an exception to this rule? At the Episcopal General Convention of 1907, canon 19 was amended as follows: "[Nothing herein shall be so

enables men to impart grace in conducting the services—especially absolution and the Lord's Supper—of the Protestant Episcopal Church. No other could do it even if he should be permitted and should make the attempt. His performance would have no more effect than would the signature of any private person to an act of a state legislature.¹ Any contemporaneous Protestant church is described in the Canons and in the denominational literature as a "denomination" or "communion" or "other body of Christians" or "religious body" or "organized religious body" or "sect" or "company of Christians" or "separated brethren" or "organized association of believers" (the descriptive terms are numerous but carefully chosen), in contradistinction to "this Church" or "the Church" or "the American Church."²

construed as] to prevent the Bishop of any Diocese or Missionary District from giving permission to Christian men, who are not ministers of this Church, to make addresses in the Church on special occasions." This action was deplored by High Churchmen. A petition—in which ministers of other churches were referred to as "so-called Christian men"—signed by over eleven hundred presbyters of the Church, was presented to the Bishops, asking that the amendment be rescinded or interpreted. But on the other hand this petition was adversely criticised by many of their brethren, and the language of the amendment itself was condemned as disrespectful to the ministry of other churches. "The amendment cast discredit on the ministry of all churches outside our communion by its use of the words: 'Christian men who are not ministers of this Church.' If the canon needed to be amended, . . . it should have read: 'Christian men and Christian ministers who are not ministers of this Church.'" (*The Churchman*, November 28, 1908.)

¹"I cannot be charged with presumption or exclusiveness or narrowness or disrespect because I do not invite my brethren to attempt to do what I am persuaded they have no right to do if they could, and am satisfied they cannot do if they would. Would any one feel aggrieved if he were the guest of the Governor of the State, and was not asked to put his signature to pardons, or Acts of the Legislature?" (The Right Rev. Franklin Seymour, in "Church Reunion," p. 176.)

²The most serious exception I know is the reference in the Preface of the Protestant Episcopal Prayer Book to "the different religious denominations of Christians in these States" organizing their "respective Churches"—which looks as if it might be a relic of the work of Dr. White in the "Proposed Book" of 1785. "The various religious denominations in the country are dignified in the Prayer Book by the name of Churches." (George Hodges, D.D., "The Episcopal Church," p. 35.) But Dr. Hodges, though writing in a bright and brotherly spirit, does not so "dignify" them.

The voices of the laymen are strong and influential in the church councils. No law can be enacted without their concurrence.

The ministry is constituted in the same three orders, and with substantially the same powers and duties, as in the Church of England. The canonical age for admission to the diaconate is twenty-one years; to the priesthood, twenty-four years; to the episcopate, thirty years. An interval of at least one year must intervene between ordination to the diaconate and to the priesthood.

Laymen may be licensed by the bishop as lay-readers. They must not wear strictly clerical vestments or deliver sermons of their own composition, but are authorized to minister to the congregation by conducting the service according to the Prayer Book—with the omission of certain parts—and reading sermons prepared by approved ministers. But in vacant parishes it is not regarded as an undue extension of their office to deliver addresses or exhortations of their own.

The bishop has jurisdiction over the clergy. Candidates for ordination must be recommended by a majority of the vestry of the parish in which they hold their membership, to the Standing Committee of the diocese, and by the Standing Committee to the bishop; and the bishop, after having subjected them to certain prescribed examinations, may ordain them to the ministry. With the bishop himself, however, rests the final decision of the case: he cannot be compelled to ordain.

The clergy are amenable for both personal and official conduct to the bishop, whose duty it is to take continual oversight of them, to give good counsel, and to require the discontinuance of wrong practices, as need may be. At the trial of a minister, the bishop presiding has the right to modify an adverse verdict of the court.

Bishops are elected to their office by the Diocesan Convention, approved by the General Convention (or in the interval of the General Convention by the bishops and the Standing Committees of all the dioceses), and consecrated by not fewer than three bishops. A missionary bishop, however, is nominated by the House of Bishops and elected by the House of Deputies.

In every diocese a Standing Committee (in one or two dioceses composed of presbyters only, in all the other dioceses of presbyters and laymen) is appointed annually by the Diocesan Convention, as an advisory council to the bishop. Its advice may be proffered without impropriety, whether asked for or not; and in case of the diocese being temporarily deprived of the services of a bishop, because of absence, impaired health, or other cause, the Standing Committee exercises the administrative authority.

Each parish has a board of officers, the vestry, elected by the people (in some parishes by communicants only, in others by communicants and contributors jointly), and charged with the administration of its temporal affairs. They themselves need not be members of the church.

The executive officers of the vestry are called wardens.

A minister is elected to the pastorate of a church by the vestry. Notice of his election must be delivered to the bishop, who, if he see no imperative reason to the contrary, will proceed to have him "instituted" as pastor. Here

again the final decision rests with the bishop, who may inhibit the institution of the pastor elect. But such episcopal interference with the will of the vestry is not in accord with the temper and customs of the Church.

At least once in three years an episcopal visitation must be made to each church of the diocese, "for the purpose of examining the state of the church, inspecting the behavior of the clergy," and administering the rite of confirmation. Here again episcopal authority is supreme: the bishop may by administering the rite of confirmation receive the candidate into full membership in the Church, or may decline to do so.

There is held an annual Diocesan Convention, of which the bishop of the diocese is the presiding officer, composed of the duly qualified ministers of the diocese, and lay delegates (one or more, according to the rule adopted by the particular diocese) from each parish, whose duty it is to regulate and administer the affairs of the Church within its bounds, under the authority of the bishop and the General Convention. In some dioceses delegates are elected by the vestry; in others, by the congregation. In many instances the lay members are in excess of the clerical members; but the vote on any question may be taken by orders, if even a very few desire it, and thus the undue influence of the laity upon legislation is guarded against.

The legislative body of the Church is the General Convention. It consists of an Upper and a Lower House—namely, the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. The House of Deputies is made up of clerical and lay members—four clergymen and four laymen from each diocese—elected by the Diocesan Conventions. The House of Bishops sits with closed doors. The concurrence of both houses is necessary to the passage of any measure. The Convention meets triennially.

Some new features of polity, hardly as yet firmly established, are the archdiaconate (for the development and oversight of home missions), the cathedral, and the provincial organization of dioceses. These three institutions are modeled after corresponding institutions of the English Establishment.¹

8. INSTITUTIONALISM IN THESE TWO CHURCHES.

Both in England and in America the Episcopal Church embodies very conspicuously in its structure and administration the idea of institutionalism. Relatively it makes but little use of the subjective element in religion. For in that direction—so it uniformly declares—are found morbid introspection, spiritual self-conceit, despondency, unregulated enthusiasm. True, the soul must be brought face to face with its Maker, in Him who died for its redemption. But the means by which this end may be attained is the continual operation of religious rites and observ-

¹"Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 1789-1907."

ances. Only through the visible may we reach the unseen. The spirit must be clothed with a fitting and beautiful body. Hence the Church is perpetually proclaimed. There is much of the outward in congregational worship. Elaborate, ornate, artistic, spectacular, it appeals strongly to the senses. The minister is a priest; the ministry, a hierarchy. Many "holy days" are observed. The sacraments, clothed with a mystic and undefined virtue, are made very prominent.

Nor can there be a moment's doubt of the value of institutional observances in religion. But on the other hand, as in literature too many words, and all the more if they be attractive words, obscures the sense, and as in music too great display of voice is fatal to the sentiment of the song, so does undue religious ceremonial keep back the worshiper's mind from the supersensuous reality. It tends to stupefy rather than to quicken or to calm.

Neither, on the other hand, can there be a reasonable doubt that religion may become relatively too subjective, and thus incur the risk of morbid excesses. But the more common and powerful drift is in the opposite direction. Quietism is possible—and rare; but ever-present is the peril of externalism.¹

Far more serious than the mere multiplication of forms is the case of religious rites taken and practiced as embodying anti-Christian ideas. Such, unless sacerdotalism be indeed the religion of the New Testament, are the ritualistic, or sacramentarian, rites. The ritualistic congregation cherishes much medieval symbolism, revives many medieval practices, and, as in Romanism, centers the whole ministration of the Church about an altar on which is consecrated a sacrifice to be partaken of by the com-

¹The drift in this direction may be seen in such recorded facts as the following: "When Chase reached the new land of Ohio, in 1817, it seemed natural for him to begin his work at 'Covenant Creek' by calling together his neighbors for the preaching of the Word and the Prayers. When Breck and his companions laid down their packs under an elm tree in Minnesota, in 1850, it seemed equally natural and fitting to them to 'erect a rustic cross, build a rude altar of rough stones, and begin their work by the celebration of the Eucharistic Feast.'" (McConnell, "Hist. of American Episcopal Church," p. 323.)

municants, as the chief divinely appointed channel of saving grace.

The consecrated bread and wine, it is taught, are the "vessel" or "veil" or "garment" of the real body and blood of Christ, which is the sacrifice offered. Any man who undertakes to offer this sacrifice without a commission from a bishop of "apostolical descent" is a follower of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and exposed to a corresponding punishment. Baptism—which may be given even by laymen, in exceptional cases—conveys to the soul justification and the new birth.¹ As to non-episcopal Christian communions, they "have cut themselves off from the participation of the one Spirit as living in the Church and flowing through the sacraments, which are veins and arteries of the one body."²

9. ISOLATION OF THESE TWO CHURCHES.

The Anglican and the Protestant Episcopal Churches are not in fraternal relations with any other. Refused recognition by the Greek and Roman communions with which they would fain fraternize, they themselves refuse to acknowledge the Protestant Churches by which they are surrounded as in the unity of the Church of Christ. "From that moment" (when the renewed Act of Uniformity was passed, 1662), says Green the historian, the Church of England stood "isolated and alone among the churches of the world."³

¹"It [baptism] is the passage out of a state of wrath into a state of grace, and carries with it forgiveness of sins, purchased for us by the Blood of Christ, and all other blessings of the Christian covenant." (Goulbourn, "The Holy Catholic Church," p. 136.)

²"It is not a question whether we can give up all symbolism in religion; the only question is, how the Church can use religious symbolism without abusing it. The symbol is not in itself an evil thing, whether it be a light before an altar, a silver star in the Chapel of the Nativity at Bethlehem, or a statue of Luther kissing the open Bible, or a flower before a pulpit. . . . It is only when the symbol is made an idol that the truth is betrayed." (Newman Smyth, "Passing Protestantism and Coming Catholicism," pp. 186, 187.)

³"The Reformation had severed it irretrievably from those who still clung to the obedience of the Papacy. By its rejection of all but Episcopal orders the Act of Uniformity severed it as irretrievably from the general body of the Protestant Churches whether Lutheran or Reformed. And

Attempts have been made by English Churchmen to open the way to the recognition of their communion as a true Church of Christ by the Orthodox Eastern Church.¹ But all has thus far been unavailing. The Holy *Orthodox* Catholic Apostolic Oriental Church has always been ready with the answer to any such suggestions, Unless you hold the Orthodox Faith (which, in fact, you do not), it is vain to ask our recognition or fellowship.

A similar attempt was made by prominent members of the Church of England, less than fifteen years ago, to obtain from the Pope an official declaration of the validity of Anglican orders.² Even so great and wise a statesman as William Ewart Gladstone thought it worth while to write a letter containing an able argument on the subject to Cardinal Rampolla, and was strangely sanguine enough to hope for a favorable result from the united undertaking. But the reply of Leo XIII., in the Bull *Apostolicæ Curæ* (September 13, 1896), was a death-blow to all such hopes. The Pope refused to recognize any ordination by English bishops—the main ground of his decision, to state it with the utmost brevity, being that the Anglican rite of ordi-

while thus cut off from all hearty religious communion with the world without it sank into immobility within." ("History of the English People," Vol. III., p. 363.)

¹For example, in the latter part of the reign of Peter the Great, and a hundred years later by certain English Tractarians. Of wider significance was the Conference of Bonn (1874), of which Dean Howson and Canon Liddon were members. The Conference was composed of Old Catholics, Anglicans, Russian and Eastern Orthodox Christians, and American Episcopalians. Its object was to secure inter-communion for the churches (informally) represented. (See Schaff, "Creeds of Christendom," Vol. II., p. 545.)

²"Leo XIII. was approached by those who claimed to speak, if not for the entire Anglican body, at least for a numerous section of its members. They assured him that there was a widespread opinion among you that our practice of reordaining convert clergymen was an imputation on your Church which had not originated in any due inquiry, but rested on historical assumptions which could no longer be sustained. They told him they felt strongly on the matter, in the belief that you were being treated with a manifest disregard for truth and justice; and they urged that the effect was to nourish prejudices against the Holy See most injurious to the cause of Christian reunion." ("Vindication of the Bull *Apostolicæ Curæ*," p. 5.)

nation to the priesthood does not "intend" to confer, and hence cannot possibly confer, the power to offer sacrifice. All, therefore, was null and void. The Anglican body's sacraments were no sacraments, their ministry no ministry, they themselves no Church of Christ.¹

On the other hand, these same two Episcopal churches of England and America have, through their Bishops' Chicago-Lambeth Declaration, proposed fraternity and even organic union with other Protestant churches.² The Christian spirit in which it was done evoked, as was meet, a sympathetic response. But the proposal requires, as one of the four conditions, that only their own ordination to the Christian ministry shall be regarded as valid.³ It could not reasonably have hoped to be accepted.

Here, then, in this offer of a *via media*, appears the unwilling maintenance of a somewhat singular ecclesiastic isolation.⁴ May

¹The Archbishops of Canterbury and York replied to the Papal Bull—referring to the Church of Rome as a "sister Church of Christ." The Roman Archbishop and Bishops in England wrote in vindication of the Bull—referring to the Church of England as "your communion," "the Anglican body," or one of "the separated communities."

²The Articles of Unity were adopted by the House of Bishops in Chicago, 1886; in London, at Lambeth Palace, with slight modifications, 1888; by the Episcopal General Convention, 1892.

³This condition, or Fourth Article of Unity, is phrased as follows: "The acceptance of the historic episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church."

"To approach the great Protestant churches of the world with the statement that their ministries are unlawful is to propose not reunion, but absorption; not consideration, but contempt." (Bishop W. C. Doane, as reported in a recent address to the Diocesan Convention of Albany, N. Y.)

⁴It is a most encouraging sign that Churchmen, no matter who they are, should get together to try to do away with the isolation of the Anglican communion. It is a good thing for men to recognize that that isolation is not natural and is not final in any direction, whether it be considered from the point of the compass where Protestantism lies or the opposed point of the compass where Romanism is found." (*The Churchman*, February 22, 1908.)

"The scope and destiny of the Anglican Communion are here at stake. As a minority among English-speaking Christians it may indeed maintain

we determine its true significance? Is it that of simple fidelity at all hazards to a divine trust of ministerial orders, containing a "great deposit" of sacramental grace, or is it that of a pathetic misconception of the mind of the Master as to the vocation of his ministers and the intercommunion of his churches?

a glorious tradition and preserve an influential type of spiritual life and activity; but its full natural growth and the proper exercise of its ideal function are not possible without the recovery of those who have been alienated from it in the past." (Dean Armitage Robinson, "The Vision of Unity," p. 61.)

IV.

THE EPISCOPAL IDEA: PATRIARCHAL, IMPERIAL, PAPAL.

THE merely prelatie theory of church government is really a theory of diocesan government, and nothing more. For the common oversight of two or more dioceses, it can consistently make no provision. Because, according to this theory, the whole governing power inheres in the individual bishop, each one acting alone as a monarch in his own district. What then shall be the relations of the various bishops to one another? Over which district shall each be ruler? Some man or some body of men must decide. Or, supposing that there should be agreement as to territorial jurisdiction, each several appointee taking possession of his particular diocese—how shall all the dioceses collectively, constituting the Church as a whole, be ruled? Where is the supreme authority?¹

In some Episcopal churches—the English and the Russian, for example—the State is this supreme authority. But it will hardly be maintained that the rule of the State over the Church is also an original institute of Christ. Indeed, how the bishops can

¹Dr. William Jones Seabury's solution of the difficulty is as follows: "It is true that Christ's commission imposes an obligation upon the bishops to act in common, but, inasmuch as the nature of their authority is such as to presuppose the power of individual action in direct responsibility to Christ alone, the common action can only be by consent and voluntary agreement, which is federation. Every individual bishop holding an entire share of the power of his order is able to exercise it independently of all others similarly commissioned; and if he waive this ability in deference to Christ," and so on. ("Introduction to Church Polity," pp. 150, 151.) I cannot reconcile the ideas in either of these two sentences. If "Christ's commission imposes an obligation upon the bishops to act in common," how can this common action "only be by consent and voluntary agreement?" Or, to take up the same idea as differently expressed in the next sentence: It either is or is not the will of Christ that the bishop should exercise his power independently; if it is, then he cannot rightfully subordinate the exercise of this power to the decision of others; if it is not, then he is not rightfully "able to exercise it independently."

consent to it without unfaithfulness, under the successional and prelatic theory of the Church's constitution, is a standing marvel. If they believe themselves to have been ordained by Christ as the supreme lawmakers and rulers of the Church, so that they dare not acknowledge either presbyters or people as such, how dare they acknowledge a civil ruler as the Church's head and a civil legislature as its lawmaking body? Whence comes the liberty to surrender to an outside authority at once their own divinely constituted power of government and the very autonomy of the Church itself? Better die than betray such a trust—than be guilty of "treason to their great Head."

There are more obvious and less objectionable arrangements, however, that might be made. Let the bishops elect one of their own number an archbishop, and obey him. Or let them meet together in council, either, as in the case of the Protestant Episcopal Church, with the coöperation of laymen, or without it, and decide all questions according to the will of the majority. But these, again, are simply expedient policies; neither of them is any part of the supposed original investiture of governing power received by each individual bishop from Christ through the "first Apostles."

Who then, we may repeat, shall govern the diocesans themselves, and through them the whole Church, of which the various dioceses are only the territorial divisions?

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PATRIARCHAL IDEA.

The answer of the Orthodox Eastern Church to this question is only another expedient arrangement. Above the diocesan bish-

¹"The principle of the apostolic succession involves the truth that the bishops of the Catholic Church are clothed with a spiritual authority and a responsibility which they cannot alienate from themselves, or commit to the secular government, without treason to their great Head. . . .

"If this then be the case, the English Church has to learn as well as to teach—to recover a principle as well as maintain it. For it admits of no question that, for instance, the established Church of Scotland, though it is Presbyterian, has maintained more successfully than the Church of England with her catholic succession the spiritual independence of Christ's society." (Gore, "Church and Ministry" (4th ed.), pp. 318, 319.)

ops let there be metropolitans; above the metropolitans, patriarchs; and supreme over all, the Ecumenical Council. Let the patriarchs, under the authority of the Ecumenical Council, each stand at the head of his own territory; but let the Patriarch of Constantinople hold a primacy of honor over his confrères. For was not the "primacy of honor after the city of Rome" given to him by decree of the First Council of Constantinople (in 381)? And now that Rome has not only become unbearable through lust of ecclesiastical power, but has fallen away from the Orthodox faith once for all delivered to the Christians, let Constantinople be recognized as chief of the three remaining patriarchates—Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem; and so let the Patriarch of Constantinople be, in this sense, and let him therefore be called, Ecumenical Patriarch.

It may be added, that when the churches represented by the sees of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem were crushed into pitiful feebleness by the conquests of Islam, and when, on the other hand, the patriarchate of Constantinople was vastly extended—especially by the conversion of Russia—the claim of the bishop of Constantinople to the title of Ecumenical Patriarch appeared still stronger and more fitting.

The rule of the patriarchs, however, in certain very important instances, has been more nominal than real. For the different national churches are left practically to govern themselves—or rather to *be governed by the State*.¹ The tie that binds them together under the patriarchal superintendence is orthodoxy—the accepted standard being the creeds of the seven Ecumenical Councils—rather than episcopal authority. Not only was the Russian Church, for instance, as we shall see later, permitted to have its own patriarch, and afterwards to abolish the patriarchate, and set up a government with the Czar and the Holy Governing Synod at its head; but since then similar national autonomies have been established in Greece, Roumania, Montenegro, Servia, and Bulgaria—in all the orthodox European

¹Fairbairn, "Catholicism, Roman and Anglican," pp. 181, 182.

states.¹ In fact, the Czar of Russia has more of the character of chief personal ruler in the Church of the East than has the Patriarch of Constantinople.²

But how about the Ecumenical Council? That, when convened, must wield supreme authority. But its meetings would seem to be little more than a rather remote possibility; for according to Orthodox reckoning, none has been held for more than eleven hundred years. The Second Council of Nice (787) is counted as the Seventh and last. It might have seemed possible that at some time after the separation from Rome in 1054 the Eastern Church would convene a general council to settle its difficulties (of which it has had a full share), or to restate its faith, or to define its relations to other Christian communions. But while this has been talked of in recent years and a hope of it cherished, thus far nothing of the sort has been done.

Is it because of an uneasy feeling that since the vast Patriarchate of the West, representing many more adherents than all the other four put together, has gone off in heresy and schism, a properly ecumenical council cannot be held? or is it a case of obsession by the idea that the Nicæan Council of the eighth century, whose chief significance is the sanctioning of image-worship, would somehow have been justified in announcing, "The Seven Synods are the people, and behold, wisdom will die with them?" or shall it be set down to Eastern Orthodoxy's inertness and "arrested development?" or is it rather through fear of

¹There may be counted, indeed, no fewer than sixteen separate and independent ecclesiastical bodies that, by confession of the same system of doctrines and acknowledgment of the primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch, constitute the Orthodox Church of the East. These churches are of all degrees of territorial and numerical strength, from Russia, with her multiplied millions of communicants, to Sinai, whose patriarch rules over only the monastery of St. Katherine on Mt. Sinai with its fourteen daughter houses.

²"The Czar is the personal, as Constantinople is the local, center of the whole Greek Church; and he keeps a lustful eye upon the city of the Bosphorus as his future capital, where, at no distant day, there must be a tremendous reckoning with Mohammedanism." (Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Art. "Greek Church.")

some doctrinal derangement from the possible action of such a council?

This Episcopal Church, then, with the Bishops of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem as its chiefs, and yet with the far greater part of its membership outside their jurisdiction, must be classed as distinctly less than a rigid oligarchy.

As to its supreme governing and teaching authority, however, it claims no lower attribute than infallibility. The assembled body of its bishops—that is to say, the possible ecumenical council—can commit no error, either doctrinal or ecclesiastical. Such a council will be guided by the Holy Spirit into an infallible decision on all matters of faith and even of polity.

2. ORTHODOXY THE PREDOMINANT NOTE OF THE EASTERN CHURCH.

Here perhaps may be found the chief explanation of the long intermittence of the ecumenical councils. With the adjournment of the last of these councils the creed of the Eastern Church was, according to her profession, fixed unchangeably. Let no opportunity or temptation, therefore, be given for any further legislation on the subject, lest there be disturbing results.

With the Church of Rome it is different. She adds to her dogmas. Under the veil of “development” and “definition,” she may tax the consciences of the faithful with new articles of faith. Cardinal Newman could write an “Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,” and declare that “to grow is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often;” but it would probably be impossible to find a similar book or sentiment from the pen of an Orthodox Eastern theologian. A pope or an ecumenical council may frame such a dogma as the Immaculate Conception or Papal Infallibility in the nineteenth century or in any other. Protestant churches, also, may and sometimes do revise their confessions of faith. But Eastern Orthodoxy is content to rest strictly in the faith of the fathers. Concerning “the development of Christian doctrine” subsequent to 787 A.D., it has

simply to say, There is none. It wants no "development," no "definitions," no "revisions." Not unnaturally, therefore, it might fear lest in the discussions and decisions of an ecumenical council it should be "disturbed in its ancient, solitary reign." It loves the dim shelter of the "ivy-mantled tower."

Since the great schism of 1054 Rome has made repeated efforts to win the Orthodox Eastern Church back into her communion. Three reunion councils have been held—namely, in 1098, in 1274, and in 1439. The last of these, which was held at Ferrara-Florence, seemed for a time to have succeeded. It was numerously attended by bishops and other representatives of the two churches—the Pope, the Emperor, and the Patriarch of Constantinople being included in the number. An agreement was reached on even the most troublesome of the points in dispute, the *Filioque* of the Nicene Creed and the Primacy of the Pope. So the restored unity of the Church was decreed and published.

But this reunion, which lasted for the space of thirty-three years, was official only. It did not show the signs of intellectual conviction and Christian love. The motive of the East for consenting to it was to get an army from the West to help defend the city of Constantinople against the long-threatened, and now terribly threatening, attack of the Turks. But the West sent no army worthy of mention; Constantinople fell; the Christian Empire perished. Then, after a few years (in 1472), the poor, superficial reunion of the Western and the Eastern Church that had been proclaimed at Florence was formally repudiated by a synod of Constantinople.

Since that time the prospect of reunion has been rendered still more hopeless by the addition of the two dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility to the Roman creed. These dogmas the Church of the East looks upon as out-and-out novelties, unheard-of in the early Church, products of the restless brains of creed-tampering Western schismatics. In a word, the whole attitude of the Orthodox theologians and rulers toward any suggestion of yielding to the claims or invitations

(that, for example, of Pope Leo XIII. in 1894)¹ of what they call the Papic Church (ἡ ἐκκλησία παπική) seems to be that of unhesitating and even scornful refusal.

Nor, as we have seen, have the tentative approaches of the English Ritualists and the Old Catholics to open a way for intercommunion with the Church of the Seven Councils met with any real success. "We only are Orthodox, your heresies must be renounced," is the rock on which all such efforts have thus far gone to pieces.

Claiming, then, to be the original Church of Christ, not only through the succession of bishops without an autocratic head but also and chiefly through the succession of official orthodox teaching—in brief, being both "Apostolic" and "*Orthodox*"—the Eastern Church looks upon Rome as the arch-heretic and upon Protestant bodies as similarly out of the way. Moreover, through its common creed and patriarchal administration, it rejoices to avoid, on the one hand, papal autocracy, and, on the other, Protestant disorder. With true Aristotelian wisdom the "Greek" Church would keep this golden mean—steadily proclaiming itself meanwhile the one true Christian Ecclesia, "the one and only heir of Christ and the only ark of salvation left to men by God's grace."

The Ecumenical Patriarch is elected by the bishops of his patriarchate, in coöperation with a mixed council composed of bishops and laymen. His election must be confirmed by the Sultan. Indeed, he may be, and in many instances has been, deposed by the Sultan. But this has usually been done, it seems, at the request of Christians themselves. Because of the lamentable presence of contending parties in the Church, depositions and reappointments have been not infrequent occurrences. His title, worthy of notice only as an example of Eastern grandiloquence, is "The most holy, the most divine, the most wise Lord, the Lord Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch."

Bishops must be not less than thirty years of age and unmarried. To them alone is given the power of ordination. But to the next lower order

¹"The yearning desire of Our heart bids Us conceive and hope that the day is not far distant when the Eastern Churches, so illustrious in their ancient faith and glorious past, will return to the fold they have abandoned" (Encyclical Letter on "The Reunion of Christendom," June 20, 1894.)

of ministers, the priests, are committed the other six sacraments, or "mysteries"—namely, the Lord's Supper, baptism, confirmation, penance, anointing the sick (*ἐνχέλαιον*, prayer-and-oil), matrimony.

Priests may be either married (but not twice married) or unmarried at the time of ordination—though, as a matter of fact, in almost every case they are married. But under no circumstances are they permitted to marry afterwards.¹ They are appointed to their parishes by the bishop. Quite unlike the Roman priests, they wear long hair and full flowing beard.

Note some peculiar features in the administration of the "mysteries," as compared with their administration in the Roman Church. Confession is made only to a priest who has reached the age of forty years, and, having been duly authorized by the bishop, becomes thus a "ghostly father" (*πνευματικός*). It is infrequent and lacking in specificness. It usually includes only declarations of sinfulness in general or of what are accounted the most serious sins. What is of more significance, penance is not a satisfaction offered by the penitent for his sins; but a help toward a better life; and it is not prescribed unless asked for. There are no confessionals: confessor and penitent stand in full view of the congregation. Absolution is given in an optative, not a declarative, form: "The Lord absolve thee."

At the Lord's Supper the congregation fall down in worship as the officiating priest and his assistants enter the church with the bread and wine as yet unconsecrated; and the consecration takes place out of view of the congregation, behind a curtain which is in imitation of the veil before the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the Temple. Both the bread and the wine are given to the laity, who receive it standing, and from a gold or gilt spoon in which both elements are contained—leavened bread soaked in wine; and in the number of communicants even baptized infants are included. It is usual for these to intermit the taking of the communion at three or four years of age, and to resume it when they begin the practice of confession, at about the age of seven. The change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is believed to take place not, as the Roman Church teaches, when the Lord's words of institution are recited by the priest, but a little later in the ceremony when a special prayer (*Ἐπίκλησις*) for this miraculous change is offered.

Communion is given to the people four times a year—the appointed days being Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday, and "the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God" (August 15). Also, at these times particularly people

¹This law, like most features of the Eastern Church, is in accordance with a rule of the early Church—in this case a rule which not only forbade the marriage of priests but also the ordination of men who had already been twice married. "We have already said that a bishop, a priest, and a deacon, when they are constituted, must be but once married, whether their wives are alive or whether they be dead, and that it is not lawful for them, if they are unmarried when they are ordained, to be married afterwards." (Const. Apost., vi. 17.)

are expected to make confession; and penance, if asked for, is prescribed.

Baptism is by dipping three times in water. Confirmation is administered not by the bishop but by the priest, and even in the case of infants it is given at the time of baptism. The ceremony consists not in the laying on of hands but in anointing with an oil which the bishop only is permitted to consecrate—so that the bishop too has some part in this rite.¹

The anointing of the sick with oil may be administered repeatedly; for its motive is their recovery to health rather than, as in the extreme unction of the Roman Church, their preparation for death. Preferably it is performed not by a single priest, but by several—seven being regarded as the perfect number.

Ordained monks, as in the Roman Church, are the regular (living-up-to-rule) clergy, in contradiction to the “secular” clergy. The peculiar honor that is put upon them—namely, that only out of their ranks may bishops be chosen—is not in compliance with any written law, but in accordance with a primitive custom that has the force of law.

The minor orders of church officers—below the order of deacon—are strangely numerous. They are divided into groups, and these into classes. Such officers as the keeper of archives, the bearer of images, the ringer of bells, and the cleaner of lamps, are included among them. This excessive multiplication of officials is akin to the excessive ceremonialism and rude splendor of the Orthodox ritual.²

The use of no instrument of music, not even an organ, is permitted in the churches. For was not the primitive Christian custom that of singing only? Choirs are composed of men and boys exclusively; and it is the custom to train them very carefully for their office. The Eastern chant has been described as “the most wonderful display of accurate ear and skill in the world.” But to a stranger it is likely to prove unattractive or even painful.

While pictures, mosaics, and bas-relief sculpture are freely used in worship, the use of statuary and high-relief sculpture is prohibited. Nor is the distinction wholly an arbitrary one. It apparently rests upon two grounds: (1) that the ancient idols

¹An instance of the utter overdoing of ritual is seen in the fact that no fewer than forty ingredients enter into the composition of this “chrism,” or anointing oil.

²“The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox Eastern Church;” “The Holy Catechism” of Nicolas Bulgari; Fortescue, “The Orthodox Eastern Church.”

of Greece were statues, not pictures; (2) that images are forbidden—in the Second Commandment, for example—because of the danger of the worshiper's identifying or confusing the image with the being represented by it, which, it is supposed, is not likely to take place except in the case of the statue or the high-relief image. Not, however, that such a supposition is well founded; for the facts are against it. The icons of the orthodox Russian, for instance, receive as idolatrous a veneration as the statues of the Roman Catholic.

The Eastern Church, unlike the Roman, has no universal language for its liturgical services. It might indeed make out a better case for the universal and perpetual use of its original Greek, the language of the New Testament and of the earliest Christian fathers, than Rome is able to prove for its ecclesiastic Latin. But both the national and the popular spirit have forbidden. Each people must be permitted to worship in its own native tongue.

Public worship takes the form of a long and showy ceremonial. Distinctly scenic in character, it is adapted to delight or to weary the senses, not to minister grace and knowledge to the worshiper. Of preaching there is little or none. And the effect of their religion upon the moral life and conduct of the people seems to be painfully small.¹

3. THE IMPERIAL IDEA IN THE RUSSO-GREEK CHURCH.

Where shall we look for an embodiment of the idea of the civil governor as at the same time the supreme governor of the Church in his dominions—the idea of Imperial Episcopacy? It appears, however inconsistently with the divine right claimed by High Churchmen for the bishops, as well as with the evangelical

¹"They have even a more complicated system of ceremonies [than the Roman Catholics], with gorgeous display, semi-barbaric pomp, and endless changes of sacerdotal dress, crossings, gestures, genuflections, prostrations, washings, processions, which so absorb the attention of the senses that there is little room left for intellectual and spiritual worship." (Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Art. "Greek Church.")

conception of Christianity, in the King's headship of the Church of England. But it may be seen in a more distinct and powerful form in another state-church, which will now for a little while engage our attention.

Immobile, superstitious, politically entangled, humiliated by the sword and scepter of the Infidel, the Church of the East, since the early centuries, has taken but an insignificant part in the progress of the kingdom of God in the world. And its part would have been still less but for the conversion of a people, scattered, it is true, through grim forests and over dreary, monotonous plains, but extending their boundaries east and west, and destined to become one of the mightiest of world powers. Russia was Christianized from Constantinople; nor has it faltered for one moment in its devotion to the form of Christianity thus received.

Of the hundred million members of the Eastern Church to-day, three-fourths or more live under the government of the Czar. It is the Slav, not the Greek, by whom the ancient Greek orthodoxy is now most prominently represented.

Russian Christianity dates from the tenth century. It supplanted a simple form of nature-worship, in which the sky, the sun, the thunder, the frost, the earth, were deified, and a multitude of spirits infested the woods, the streams, and the homes of the people. Without a temple, without a priesthood, with rude images only, the worshipers from their miserable huts gathered together, in the forest or on the hills, to seek the favor of their gods.¹

The story of the overthrow of this ancient superstition by Eastern Christianity is largely legendary:² but there seems no doubt that it contains an authentic account of a national conver-

¹Noble, "Russia and the Russians," pp. 3-5

²"It seemed to me useless to give Nestor's narrative of the Russians' conversion; for a great part of it, especially the alleged investigation by Vladimir of Judaism, Islamism, and Christianity, Greek and Latin, bears all the appearance of being a legend." (Leroy-Beaulieu, "Empire of the Tsars," Vol. III, p. 29, n.)

sion. The Grand Prince Vladimir—whose grandmother, Olga, and whose wife, Anne, daughter of the Eastern Emperor Basil, were Christians—made profession of the Christian faith. Then at his word the idols of the land were burned, or hewn in pieces, or cast into the Dnieper, and at Kiev in the same river the people were baptized. There is no record of any serious opposition to the royal commands. As the work of conversion advanced northward, however, it did encounter opposition, and was carried on by force. But the Russ, though a hard fighter in battle and not destitute of individuality, was of docile temperament, then as now reverent and submissive to authority. Moreover, his barbaric tastes were well pleased with the ceremonial of the Church; and what was of greater importance, he was notably of a religious spirit. So his ecclesiastical conversion proved to be no difficult task, and was soon completed.

As in certain more familiar historic instances, however, a partial compromise was effected between the old faith and the new. Favorite heathen gods continued to be adored, only they were somewhat transformed by bearing the names of Christian saints. And these maintain their place in the popular faith even in the present day.¹ In the higher classes there is less of superstition, but instead of more true religion, skepticism and indifference.

The Church of Russia was included in the Patriarchate of Constantinople. But after the founding of Moscow and the removal of both the capital and the metropolitan see to that new northern city, the Russian Church became practically independ-

¹"Hence, though monotheism is the avowed faith of the Orthodox Church, the Russian peasant continues to believe more or less in the original polytheism of his pagan ancestors. He does not name the various divinities, and may not hold them consciously apart in his mind, yet he finds their chief characters again in the attributes which he has been taught to associate with the principal saints of the Christian calendar. As seen, moreover, in his superstitions, in those spirit invocations and magical formulæ which form so considerable a part of popular literature, he continues to believe in that same spirit world which Grand-Prince Vladimir, by a mere ceremony of baptism, vainly supposed that he could vanish forever from the Russian land." (Noble, "Russia and the Russians," pp. 175, 176.)

ent. For the Grand-Prince now appointed, on his sole authority and with the concurrence of a conference of bishops, a *Metropolitan of Russia*. A century later the metropolitan was made a patriarch, and Moscow, now declared to be the Third Rome, became a patriarchate, coördinate with those of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. The Russian patriarchs, however, at their own request, were regularly confirmed in their office by the Patriarch of Constantinople, until, in 1660, Russia was formally authorized by the Eastern Church to elect its own patriarch and dispense with his confirmation by Constantinople.¹

4. AUTOCRATIC RULE OF THE CZAR.

But the real ecclesiastic ruler of Russia is the Czar. From Ivan the Terrible (1533-1584) to Nicholas II. (1894 —), the reigning sovereign has wielded despotic power in Church as well as in State. The Church, indeed, greatly helped to make him what he is. All through the feudal period the effort at the centralization of power was seconded by the ecclesiastics. It was their strong and persistent hands, among others, that crowned the Grand Prince *Autocrat of all the Russias*. And now, without unwillingness on their part, he became their own iron-handed chief. The Orthodox faith wrought alike for the unification of the Church and of the State in an absolute monarchy.

At the Czar's command even the patriarch had to yield up his office long ago. Peter the Great (1689-1725) abolished the office, and established in its stead The Most Holy Governing Synod. "I am your patriarch," was his reply to the request for its restoration.² And the people would have it so; for their

¹Alzog, "Universal Church History," Vol. III., pp. 468-470; Stanley, "The Eastern Church," Lect. X.

²"It is clear throughout that Peter is dealing with a rival power. That Russia may have but one head, he beheads the Church. He knew how much more docile a tool he would have in a synod composed of members appointed by the sovereign, divided in opinions and interests, and bearing a divided responsibility, than in a supreme pastor independently elected and head of the Church in his own right, with her entire power centered in his person." (Leroy-Beaulieu, "Empire of the Tsars," Vol. III., p. 160.)

submission to the Czar is essentially a religious feeling. It is that of Imperial Rome for its Emperor, or that of Japan for its Mikado, determined by the imagination and reverence of the semi-Christian Slav.

Nowhere else in Christendom is the union of Church and State so close—the Church so utterly lacking in autonomy. Nowhere else is the theocratic idea so strongly presented. Moscow, the more ancient seat of government, with its Patriarchal Cathedral, where still the Czars are crowned, is the Russian Jerusalem; in the language of the peasants: “Our holy mother, Moscow.” Russia herself is *Holy* Russia. Her wars are crusades; her mission, to plant the cross in the lands of the Infidel and the pagan. And as to the Czar, God himself has ordained him, clothed him with unlimited power, set him to rule in the nation and the Church. Are there those who do not believe that the “Orthodox monarchs have been raised to the throne by virtue of a special grace of God—nor that at the moment the sacred oil is laid upon them, the gifts of the Holy Ghost are infused into them anent the accomplishment of their exalted mission?” Such unbelievers are pronounced accursed every year by the Church: “Anathema! anathema! anathema!” It is not about the person of any priest or bishop, as a visible object, but about the person of the anointed sovereign, that the religious sense of the nation gathers.¹ It is under the spell of his awful claim to the obedience of those whom he calls “My Children,” that the people have bowed and crossed themselves in idolatrous homage and fear through the centuries.²

¹“There can be no reasonable doubt that the power of Russia’s Czar, vast and arbitrary as it is, derives its strength from the Russian people. It is not the Czar’s personal power; it is his power as head of the national Church, as semi-sacred representative of the race and its historical development and organization.” (Woodrow Wilson, “The State,” p. 596.)

²It used to be the custom for the people to fall upon their knees in the street when the Czar passed along; but this form of idolatry was brushed aside by one of the reforming dicta of Peter the Great: “Where is the difference,” he said, “between God and the Czar, if the same honors are paid to both? The honor due to me consists in people crawling before me less, but in serving me and the state with the more zeal and fidelity.”

Not that this spirit of unselfish but misdirected loyalty is universal. There are large and significant exceptions. That "invasion of ideas" which batteries and bayonets are impotent to resist has not spared the dominions of the Czar. The long procession of political exiles to the death-in-life of Siberia tells the story of a determined opposition both to the abuses and the principle of absolutism; and now more hopefully than ever, it promises their overthrow. Not only so, but a great army of Dissenters, rationalistic, evangelical, mystical, some exceeding fanatical and corrupt, dating from the seventeenth century onward, and numbering now from 2,000,000 to 15,000,000, represents the protest against the same autocratic rule extended into the sphere of religion.

The members of the Most Holy Governing Synod are appointed by the Czar. It is really his representative, not in any proper sense the representative of the Church, and is so described in both the Civil and the Ecclesiastical Code. Is the Czar, then, a pope? Not so. He is, indeed, adored, like the pope, as the image of God on earth, with none above him; but his ecclesiastical authority embraces the sphere of government only. On no question of doctrine has he ever undertaken to speak. His government is *Cæsaro-papal*.

The Synod is composed of metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, abbots, and two married priests. It acts under the control of the High Procurator, a layman appointed by the Czar to see that it executes the royal will. He presents to the Synod the measures which the Czar would have it pass, and to the Czar the acts of the Synod for his approval or veto. Indeed, every act of the Synod must be validated by the High Procurator, as the Czar's representative before the body.

The Empire is divided into sixty dioceses, of which about fifty are in Europe. No bishop bears rule over any other. The titles *metropolitan*, *archbishop*, and *bishop* represent differences of rank or dignity, but not a graded jurisdiction. All are appointed by the Czar, but on the nomination of the Synod, which is permitted to present three nominees for any vacancy that may have to be filled. In most cases the bishops' homes are in convents and their habits of life abstemious, the same after elevation to the episcopate as before.

The bishop is assisted in the government of his diocese by the *Diocesan Consistory*, whose members are chosen by himself and whose acts are not

valid without his confirmation. All matters of any moment that come before this body—as, for instance, the building of a church or the permission of a bishop to be absent as long as three days from his diocese—must be referred to the Synod. In general, the machinery of government is heavy, and there is much officialism and many abuses.¹

Bishops are chosen from the monks, or “black” clergy (so called from the color of their garments). Not, however, from the common class of monks; for these as a rule are extremely ignorant and inert, distinctly inferior to the secular clergy. To set them above the secular clergy, therefore, in the office of bishop, would be a preposterous procedure. But when an educated young man—having graduated, let us say, from an “academy” or a church “seminary”—decides to seek admission into the priesthood, he has before him the choice of a place among either the married or the celibate priests. If he choose celibacy, he takes the vows, is probably appointed teacher in a church school, then perhaps is made father superior of a monastery, and may soon be elected bishop. Of the monk’s life as it is ordinarily lived, he knows little or nothing. So, through a perversion of the original idea of monachism, the wearing of the cowl is made a *sine qua non* to the bearing of the episcopal staff: “the vow of poverty has become the door of fortune.”

The married, or secular, or “white,” clergy (so called simply in contradistinction to the monks) are for the most part sons of clergymen, and are regularly educated for their office in a church “seminary”—sometimes also taking a course in an “academy.” As a class they live and die very poor. Because, notwithstanding the close connection between Church and State, the majority of the parish priests receive no stipend from the government. Generally they have the use of a piece of land, which the peasants of their charge help them to cultivate; but their principal source of income is in the form of fees for particular services, such as the administration of sacraments, the pronouncing of blessing on various occasions, and the burial of the dead.

¹“The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox Eastern Church;” Leroy-Beaulieu, “The Empire of the Tsar.”

The priest is often not a man of high Christian character, or even of temperate habits. That he should drink to drunkenness—in visiting his people from house to house, for instance—does not seem to be regarded as a serious fault. And he may always count upon being respected for his office' sake. On the other hand, his parishioners, the great majority of whom in most cases are peasants, may expect from him a certain kindly sympathy and friendly ministration. Only of such as he has will he be able to give; therefore of preaching he does almost or quite none, and in spiritual power his ministry is lamentably deficient.

The church service in Russia is rendered in an old form of the Slavonic language, the alphabet of which was invented by the brothers Cyril and Methodius, as a part of their missionary work among the Slavs in the ninth century. Up to the eighteenth century it was the written language of the Russian people; and this Church-Slavic is still intelligible to them, while at the same time impressive because of its antiquity and its separation from common uses.

The Scriptures have been translated into the popular dialect; and the Gospels and Psalms are read or listened to by the peasant in his squalid home with much enjoyment. For a long time, however, the older version (in Church-Slavic) was preferred—the language of everyday life seeming to detract from the dignity and charm of the sacred story.

The Russ is a great lover of ritual forms; not, it would seem, on account of their original symbolic meaning, but because of their impression upon the senses, and the magic influence with which the imagination clothes them. Hence the large element of paganism in his Christianity. Mass is celebrated (never privately or under an abridged form, as with the Roman Catholics), even in the rudest village church, in an ornate and dramatic manner which makes it gratifying to the congregation. The choir-singing in the churches is also greatly admired.

The inveterate tendency toward idolatry is seen in the Russian use of icons. These are pictures or carvings on wood or metal, some of them not of larger size than two or three inches square,

representing some sacred person or object—commonly a saint or the Virgin Mary. Not only in churches but also in other public places and in private houses they are everywhere to be found. Every family aims to have at least one in each room of the house. They are recipients of the greatest superstitious reverence. In church or home candles or lamps are burned before them, as symbols of prayer. The visitor is expected to salute them, the first thing, on entering any room of a private house. When a sinful act is about to be committed, not infrequently a curtain is placed before the icon, that the sacred presence may not be violated or offended.

5. THE PAPAL IDEA THAT OF A BISHOP OF BISHOPS.

Very different from any of the foregoing answers as to the headship of the Church is that of the bishop of Rome. "None of us," said Cyprian of Carthage, "does make himself a bishop of bishops." But Rome has declared in tones of thunder for fourteen hundred years: There is a bishop of bishops, even the Roman Bishop, the one and only vicar of Christ on earth; he may judge the other bishops, and may not be judged by them. Here, then, the prelatic idea reaches its logical completeness. Not a number of rulers co-equal in authority, Divinely appointed, and then left to consult and agree among themselves as to the making and the administration of law. Not that; but a pure and simple monarchy—the single headship of the pope, who is the fountain of all jurisdiction, from whose authority there is no appeal, and in obedience to whom rests perpetually the unity of the Church.

It would be hard to exaggerate the authority of the pope. He is the supreme legislator; he singly and alone may make laws, if he will, that shall be binding upon the whole Church; or, if he will, may convene an ecumenical council, preside over its deliberations, and either confirm or annul its decrees. He is the supreme judge, the highest court of appeal on all ecclesiastical questions; so that, in the language of the Vatican Council, "in all causes the decision of which belongs to the Church, recourse

may be had to his tribunal," and "none may reopen the judgment of the Apostolic See, than whose authority there is no greater, nor can any lawfully review its judgments." He, the lawmaker and judge, is also the supreme executive; appointing all the higher ecclesiastics; sending out legates to foreign countries; establishing or repressing any religious order; releasing his subjects from the obligation of vows; granting the remission of the penalty of temporal punishments for sin; through canonization making certain deceased Christians objects of worship to Christians on earth; deposing at his discretion any bishop, priest, or deacon anywhere in the Church.

Nor is the papal authority restricted in its claim to Roman Catholics. It extends (theoretically) to all baptized persons, Greek and Protestant as well as Catholic—as, indeed, does the authority of each bishop within the limits of his diocese. It is not even restricted to the ecclesiastic sphere; for has not the successor of Peter asserted the right to govern the nations in the interest of the Church, and to depose any civil ruler that may resist his will?

Neither is this all. Theologically as well as ecclesiastically the Papal See is supreme. Speaking *ex cathedra* to the whole Church on any point of doctrine or morals, the pope must be listened to as supernaturally preserved from all error. He is the absolutely infallible teacher. On his sole authority, with no reference whatever to a General Council, he may add a doctrine to the creed of the Church which none of the faithful dare refuse to profess; as, for instance, when Benedict VIII. authorized the addition of the *Filioque* to the Nicene Creed—and shall we say lost to Rome forever the four patriarchates of the East?—or when Pius IX. defined and declared the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Accordingly both the papal commands and the papal definitions of doctrine and of morals are to be accepted, on pain of exclusion from the one Church of Christ and the grace of salvation.¹

Since the middle of the eleventh century the pope has been

¹See p. 347.

elected by the cardinals. These are clerical dignitaries, receiving their office immediately from the pope, seventy in number when the college is complete—bishops, priests, and deacons of Rome and its vicinity. Even though some should reside in foreign lands—as, for instance, one in England or one in America—they are all, either theoretically or actually, connected with the churches of the city of Rome.¹

It should be noted that this election is placed in the hands of the cardinals not because they are supposed to represent the whole Church, but because they represent the diocese of the city of Rome itself. For the Holy Father is first of all bishop of Rome, and in virtue of this office becomes universal bishop. Appropriately, therefore, he is elected by the clergy of his own diocese.

Also, according to a custom which has prevailed for five hundred years (since Urban VI., 1378-1382), the pope is always selected out of the college of cardinals. But there is no written law on the subject.

The Archbishop, in addition to the superintendency of the several dioceses that make up his province, has a diocese of which he alone is bishop. He receives reports from the diocesan bishops and makes visitations in their dioceses as well as in his own. It is his prerogative also to call provincial councils and preside over them.

The Bishop takes the oversight of his diocese as chief executive officer; and in addition to the power to administer all the sacraments he is author-

¹"Nicholas II., under the guidance of Hildebrand, now a cardinal, revolutionized the ancient election of the Bishop of Rome, which, like that of all others, had been by the concurrence of clergy and people. His decree of 1059 now gave the initiative of the election to the cardinal bishops in the neighborhood of Rome and the cardinal priests in that city. (Certain chief functionaries, being the 'hinges' on which the rest of the machine moved, had come to be called 'cardinals;' and their elective assembly was afterwards known as the 'conclave.')" (Innes, "Church and State," pp. 70, 71.)

The object of Hildebrand, who was then an archdeacon and the power behind the papal throne, was to free the election of the popes from the part which the emperors had long been accustomed to take in it. Hildebrand's own election to the papacy, fourteen years after, which received the confirmation of Henry IV., was the last instance of a papal election confirmed by the Emperor.

ized to consecrate things for sacred uses—such, for instance, as buildings for public worship and oil for extreme unction. He appoints the priests of his diocese (with the exception of certain “irremovable” ones) or removes them at his will. As the archbishop has his own diocese, so the diocesan bishop has his own parish, with its church edifice (the cathedral, or church of the bishop’s *chair*). In him also rests—in the United States, at least—the title to all church edifices.

The bishop is chosen for his office by different methods in different countries. In the United States the process is somewhat elaborate. Certain priests of the diocese, the “diocesan consultors” and the “irremovable rectors,” meet together and select the three men who seem to them most suitable for the vacant episcopal chair, and send their names arranged in the order of excellence (*dignissimus, dignior, dignus*), to the Roman Propaganda. At the same time they send these same three names to the archbishop of the province for the consideration of a meeting of all the bishops of the province. At this meeting the bishops must also themselves choose three names and send them to the Propaganda; and in case of theirs being different names from the other three, they must indicate the reasons therefor. Out of the names thus presented the Propaganda may choose one or, if they see fit, may reject all and make an independent choice. But in every instance the final choice, or confirmation of the choice of others, rests with the pope. Without him no bishop can be made.

The rite of ordination to the episcopacy is performed by three bishops. Ordination by a single bishop would be valid, but it would also be “illicit.” In South America, however, a bishop may be ordained by one bishop and two or three priests, in cases where it is difficult to secure the attendance of three bishops.

The bishop administers the rite of confirmation. In the case, however, of certain priests in missions, permission to confirm is given by the pope. Which seems to show that the “power” to administer this sacrament is conferred in ordination to the priesthood; but the exercise of it is ordinarily reserved for the bishop only.

The Vicar-Apostolic is the presiding officer of a missionary district not yet erected into a diocese.

The ministry is constituted in seven orders, of which the four lesser—namely, those of Porter, Reader, Exorcist, Acolyte—are known as Minor Orders; and the three greater—those of Subdeacon, Deacon, Priest—are called Holy Orders. Ordination to any one of these orders “imprints a character,” which has reference to the saying of Mass; so that the ordinand can never lose or in any way get rid of the peculiar power which it conveys. No matter how much he might desire it, he cannot again become a layman.¹ No matter though he should degenerate into the grossest of habitual volup-

¹Cf. the effect of baptism according to the dogma of baptismal regeneration.

tuaries or the cruelest of criminals or the most radical of apostates and infidels, he still possesses the peculiar power, still bears the "character," received in ordination.¹ Once ordained to the priesthood, for example, he retains unto the end of life, as a very part of himself, the power to change a bit of bread into the body of Christ by pronouncing over it, with the intention of effecting such a change, the formula of consecration (*"Hoc est enim corpus meum"*).

The same thing, it may be noted, is not true of the power to hear confessions and grant absolution. In order to exercise this function one must receive at the hands of the bishop not only ordination but "jurisdiction" in some particular diocese.

The priest comes into direct contact with the people. He is not only ordained but also chosen to his office by the bishop. He must rule his parish, administer sacraments, give blessings, hear confessions, pronounce absolutions, and preach. Chief of all his functions, the one in virtue of which he is named *priest* and not simply presbyter, is that of saying Mass. For as God's representative he is authorized by the Church not only to forgive sins, but to change the very substance of the bread and wine on the altar into the body and blood of Christ, to offer it a sacrifice for sins, and with it to feed the souls of communicants.

Married priests are tolerated by the Roman churches in the East (the Uniates), as are a number of usages not permitted in the West.

Deacons are assistants of the priests (as sub-deacons are assistants of the deacons), authorized to administer the sacrament of baptism, to read the Gospels in the congregation, and to preach. They are eligible for promotion to the priesthood.

The laity are intrusted with no part whatever in church government. They have only to obey, and are thoroughly drilled in obedience to their rulers: the voice of the priest must be to them the voice of God.²

The general administration of the Church is carried on through what are called Congregations. These are boards composed of ecclesiastics appointed

¹"Orders also confer another grace, which is a special power in reference to the Holy Eucharist; a power full and perfect in the priest, . . . but in the subordinate ministers greater or less in proportion to their approximation to the sacred mysteries of the altar. This power is also denominated a spiritual character, which, by a certain interior mark impressed on the soul, distinguishes the ecclesiastic from the rest of the faithful, and devotes them specially to the divine service." ("Catechism of the Council of Trent," *On the Sacrament of Orders*.)

²"Instruction by the spoken word is the ordinary mode of instruction for the larger part of mankind, especially in the Church of God, where all is done by the way of authority. Whether it be a matter of belief or of conduct, of the sharpness of precept or the tenderness of counsel, the Christian must learn these truths and these rules from the mouth of his pastors." ("Ribet, *L' Ascétique Chrétienne*," p. 452.)

by the pope, located in the city of Rome, and presided over by a cardinal or by the pope himself. One is called the Holy Office, or the Holy Roman Inquisition, whose business it is to investigate and to try cases of heresy. Even bishops may be brought before this tribunal. Another is the Council, whose function is to interpret the Decrees of the Council of Trent. Still others are the Propaganda, which has charge of the missionary operations of the Church, and the Index, which examines books suspected of heresy, and prohibits the reading of such as are condemned. Eleven Congregations in all.²

6. BISHOPS' AND POPE'S ORDER THAT OF PRIESTHOOD.

It will be noticed that the episcopate is not included in the Holy Orders. The bishop, it is true, stands above the priest in the *order of jurisdiction*—somewhat as the archbishop stands above the bishop, or the pope at the head of the whole hierarchy.³ Moreover, he is made the administrator of a sacrament, namely, ordination to the priesthood, which the mere priest cannot administer, and of another, confirmation, which the priest cannot administer without a special dispensation from the pope. Nevertheless his episcopal ordination is not, like ordination to the priesthood, accounted a sacrament, nor as "imprinting a character."

It has been said that, inasmuch as this ordination is necessary to empower him to ordain and (ordinarily) to confirm, so that without the bishop no one can be received into the ministry or even into full communion with the Church, the question as to

²"Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent;" "Catechism of the Council of Trent" (E. T. by J. Donovan); "The Catholic Encyclopedia" (in process of publication), Art. *Bishop*, and others.

³"Wherefore the Holy Synod declares that, besides the other ecclesiastical degrees, bishops, who have succeeded to the place of the Apostles, principally belong to this hierarchical order [that of priesthood]." (Decrees of the Council of Trent, 23d Session, ch. 4.)

"The order of priesthood, although essentially one, has different degrees of dignity and power. The first is confined to those who are simply called Priests. . . . The second is that of Bishops. . . . The third degree is that of Archbishop. . . . Patriarchs hold the fourth place. . . . Superior to all these is the Sovereign Pontiff" ("Catechism of Council of Trent," *On Sacrament of Orders*.) Elsewhere this Catechism speaks of priesthood as the sacrament of orders "in its highest degree."

whether the episcopate should be reckoned a Holy Order or simply an order of jurisdiction would seem to be a question of name only.¹ But in point of fact it is not such a question. Because, according to definition, a Holy Order is an order which confers grace with reference to celebrating Mass, and this grace having been received in its fullness at ordination to the priesthood none of it can be received at the subsequent ordination to the episcopacy. Therefore, the priesthood must be the highest Holy Order, and the episcopacy not a Holy Order at all.

Even the pope, then, can stand no higher in Holy Orders than the priesthood. He is the Chief *Priest*, the Pontiff. Indeed, it may be that when elected he is not a priest at all, but only a deacon—as in former times was now and then the case; or he may be but a layman, which has occurred in three instances.² It is true that in such cases he will have the diaconate, the priesthood, the episcopate, as may be needed, conferred in rapid succession upon him. But even before this is done he is a real pope. The whole power of ruling, judging, and teaching is upon him; only the sacerdotal functions are wanting. Shall this be called an exception to the rule that the Roman Catholic layman is not permitted to take part in the government of his Church?

One of the conspicuous administrative adjuncts of the papal theocracy is the celibacy of the priest. The enforcement of this state as a law may be dated in the pontificate of the Pope Hildebrand (1073-1085). Before his time sacerdotal celibacy was far from universal; but through the influence of this determined and ruthless pontiff it came to be observed everywhere in the West. It is held not as a doctrine, or article of faith, but as a matter of discipline. The Council of Trent, indeed, in two of its canons pronounces an anathema upon those who say that priests or monks may contract a valid marriage, or who say that it is not better and more blessed to remain in celibacy than to enter the state of matrimony; but it does not define sacerdotal celibacy

¹Gore, "Church and Ministry," p. 105, n.

²Stanley, "Christian Institutions," p. 238.

as a doctrine.¹ Hence the ordination of married men to the priesthood might be permitted in the West, as it is in fact in the East, under the present doctrinal definitions.

Of the superior availability of a celibate priesthood for certain ecclesiastical purposes, there can be no question. The military chief prefers the unmarried soldier. Recruiting officers of the American army advertise for "unmarried men." The fewer family affections and interests, the better. Let the army have the undivided interest and attention of its soldiers, so as to become the best possible fighting machine. So likewise with the soldier of the papal army. He must be free to move here or there and to do this or that, without the "impedimenta" of wife and children. Let him renounce the endearments and responsibilities of a home. Let the Church be his home, his household, his all. So, it is hoped, will he become more whole-hearted and obedient in the service of his chief.

But so also will that which, left where the Master and his Apostles left it, may be in individual instances a blessed and abundantly useful state, become, when hardened into an ecclesiastical law, and especially when conjoined with the confessional, a source of injury and corruption which far outbalance its benefits.² It is not primarily a question of ecclesiastical power, but of the kingdom of God.

"I incline to the belief," says Cardinal Gibbons, "that, under God, the Church has no tower of strength more potent than the celibacy of her clergy."³ That she has no more potent source of moral impurity and contamination in her ministry may be believed upon equally reasonable and historic grounds.

Nor can there be the shadow of a doubt that the fine qualities of personal purity, sympathy, insight into human nature, humanness, unselfishness are strengthened and developed in the Christian ministry by the home life in holy matrimony.

¹Session XXIV., Canons ix., x.

The opposite view is taken, but does not seem to be well sustained, by Lea, "History of Sacerdotal Celibacy," pp. 640-642, n.

²Matt. xix. 3-12; 1 Cor. ix. 5; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Heb. xiii. 4.

³"The Faith of Our Fathers," p. 416.

7. AUDACITY OF THE PAPAL CLAIM.

One is dazed at the awful audacity of the papal claim—"the corrupt and terrible simplicity of Rome." But the case is somewhat relieved by the consideration that no single mind conceived it and no single generation dared to set it forth. It would indeed be the crudest of unhistoric fancies to suppose that some one man on some one day rose up and grasped all at once the stupendous investiture of authority that is now represented by the name of a Hildebrand or a Pius X. The usurpation has been shared by many minds and by successive ages. We could hardly think of any man standing alone and calmly pronouncing the curses of an ecumenical council; but a man will sit side by side with a thousand others, to deliberate and vote, to represent a constituency, to obey his superiors, and will yield to what may seem to be the logic of events, and so agree to conciliar decrees. In like manner the bishops of Rome, accepting as an inheritance the claims and aspirations of their predecessors, add something thereto, sustained by the approval of many scholars and ecclesiastic leaders, from time to time. Verily it requires courage to walk alone; but what can one not do when supported by sympathy, companionship, public opinion, the spirit of the body to which one belongs?

Again, there lies heavy upon every human soul the burden of personal religious responsibility. But the papist loses somewhat of its painfulness. It is not the habit of his life to think and act for himself in the matter of religion. That is too much: who is he that he shall undertake the tremendous task? Let him escape from himself. He will make the Church a confessor and commit both judgment and conscience to its keeping. It is the lesson he learned and the spirit he received in childhood. For to most of its advocates the Roman Catholic faith has been, through many generations, an inheritance, with all the sacred and powerful associations of that great word. "I have imbibed her doctrine," says Cardinal Gibbons in the Introduction to "The Faith of Our Fathers," "with my mother's milk. I have made her history and theology the study of my life. . . . It is to me a

duty and labor of love to speak the truth concerning my venerable mother, especially as she is so much maligned in our day." Thus is such a one led to profess the faith of *his* fathers, and to do his little part, under the pressure of their spirit and authority, to transmit it to succeeding generations. A powerful advocate, in its way, is the imagination of the heart.

But the historic papacy calls for support in Scripture, in reason, and in primitive Christian history, with nothing but echo as an answer. Because it has not been through the operation of such forces as Scripture or reason or primitive Christian history, but in defiance of them, that it has grafted its awful weight upon the Church of Christ. By motives and under conditions similar to those through which, during so much of this world's tragic history, political despotism has become a possibility and a fact, must this greatest of spiritual despotisms be explained. Out of priestly assumption, the love of rule, the powerfully suggestive example of political Rome, and a false view of the Church's economy, on the part of the priest, and out of intellectual inertness, spiritual ignorance, weakness of will, and that perverted respect for instituted authority which makes it a substitute for truth and life, on the part of the people, has it arisen and persisted.

V.

*THE EPISCOPAL IDEA: SCRIPTURAL, EXPEDIENT
—EARLIER FORMS.*

Is it inevitable that bishops should put forth unfounded claims to rulership and spiritual power in the Church of God? Can no succession of men be safely charged with so high and responsible an office as the episcopate, and no church with the duty of restraining it within the true and scriptural limitations? Undoubtedly the bestowal of extraordinary authority and opportunity of official influence is attended with extraordinary risk. For the highest points of an organization are those which expose it to the gravest perils: they stand nearest the electric storms. The human body would be less liable to fatal injury if it were organized without a brain. The most hazardous office in a republic is that of president, and in an army that of commander-in-chief. As is the effectiveness of use, so is the destructiveness of abuse.

If, then, in the case of the episcopate, its use be inseparable from the serious abuses by which it has so often been dishonored, if all the efficiency it can add to the Church and all the perils it can forefend are outweighed by the episcopal peril itself, the part of wisdom would doubtless be to do without the office. Better forego its great possible advantages than suffer the equally great perversions to which it is liable.

Happily, however, such is not the alternative. As more than one illustrative example has proved, the idea of episcopal government may be safeguarded against prelatic and hieratic encroachments, and the venerable title of bishop, though "soiled by all ignoble use," may be borne equitably and nobly. The Apostles of Jesus, in their oversight of the churches, may have and do have genuine successors in our own age.¹

¹"When a search is being made for scriptural precedents or hints in favor of episcopacy, the position of the Apostles with reference to deacons and
(462)

Let us make note of certain forms in which the idea of a scriptural and expedient episcopate has found historic expression.

1. ORIGIN OF THE EPISCOPATE IN THE EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH.

It was a fundamental principle of the Lutheran Reformation that all ecclesiastical power inheres in local churches, or congregations. The purpose of a church is to minister the word of God and the sacraments; and any church has the right to elect and ordain its own pastor, who thus becomes its official organ for the accomplishment of this purpose. In brief, it has authority from God to do in its sphere whatever may be done by the universal Church. Ministers and people are in exactly the same sense a priesthood unto God, being higher or lower in office only, not in spiritual power.

Hence no higher ecclesiastical authority than that of the congregation is necessary to ordination to the Christian ministry. "If any pious laymen were banished to a desert," says Luther,¹ "and having no regularly constituted priest among them, were to agree to choose to that office one of their own number, married or unmarried, this man would be as truly a priest as if he had been consecrated by all the bishops in the world."

Thus far the organizing principle must be characterized as pure congregationalism. But it was also held that no specific form of organization has been prescribed in the New Testament; that therefore the Christian congregations are not bound to stand independent of one another, but may, if they choose, organize themselves under a common representative government; that

presbyters will not be overlooked by those who are on the watch for intimations of the mind of the Spirit; but to affirm, as Cyprian does, that the Apostles were formally bishops, is to speak without the warrant of Scripture, and in forgetfulness of the essential points of distinction between the Apostolic office and that of a bishop in later times." (Litton, "The Church of Christ," p. 284.)

¹In an "Appeal to His Imperial Majesty and to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," in the year 1520. (D'Aubigné, "History of the Reformation" (1849), Vol. I., pp. 476, 477.)

moreover, as a matter of order, efficiency, and Christian fraternity, they ought to do so.¹

Now of the government that arose under the influence of these ideas, one feature was an episcopate. For the Lutheran Reformation was conservative, not revolutionary. Luther would destroy nothing except what was subversive of God's word. Apart from this conservative spirit, indeed, both Luther and Melancthon were inclined to favor the episcopate as supplying a real need in church government.² The three Roman Catholic bishops, therefore, who in Germany embraced the reformed doctrines, were permitted to retain their sees, as spiritual rulers; and evangelical bishops were also appointed—one, Nicolas of Amsdorf, installed by Luther himself, and another, George of Anhalt, by Luther and Melancthon.

This episcopal office, however, did not prove to be permanent. It was overborne and allowed to lapse, under the ecclesiastical power of the civil rulers, "the episcopate of the prince."³ And

"As order is necessary to the prosperity of every associate body, and as Jesus Christ has left no entire, specific form of government and discipline for his Church, it is the duty of every individual church to adopt such regulations as appear to them most consistent with the spirit and precepts of the New Testament, and best calculated to subserve the interests of the Church of Christ.

"And as men exercising the right of private judgment agree in the opinion that Christianity requires a social connection among its professors, . . . reason dictates that those holding similar views of faith and practice should associate together; that it is their duty to require for admission to church membership among them, or for induction into the sacred office, and for continuance in either, such terms as they deem most accordant with the precepts and spirit of the Bible.

"Upon the broad basis of these principles was the Evangelical Lutheran Church founded, immediately after the Reformation. Adhering to the same principles, the Church in America is governed by three Judicatories: the Council of each individual church, the District Synods, . . . and one General Synod." (Formula of Government of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ch. I., sec. 5, 6, 7.)

¹Giesler, "Church History," Vol. IV., sec. 46.

²"According to Luther, it is the duty of the princes to use their authority in religious matters as well as in all other matters pertaining to the welfare of their subjects. . . . Thus the prince was, by virtue of his position, . . . the general superintendent or bishop in his dominions. . . . And

here is shown the unhappy flaw in the Lutheran church-building. It began with evangelical liberty in both organization and doctrine; but soon degenerated, as to organization, into forms of political expediency; or, as has been said, "it began in ideas and ended in force." Rulers of the State became overseers of the flock of Christ. We are told, indeed, that this was a necessity of the times, to prevent the overthrow of the great Reformer's work by the compact and powerful hierarchy of Rome, with its political allies. Governments were arrayed, with scepter and sword, against the gospel. If then other governments were ready to organize, defend, and maintain it, why not accept their services, even at the cost of giving them authority to rule the organized Christianity which they had saved? Either that or the violent suppression of Protestantism at its very outset—thus it has been argued—was the alternative.

But if so, we must believe it a most unhappy necessity under which, in that period of storm and stress, the less of two such evils was chosen. Because, on the one hand, there can be no doubt that the "religious" wars which followed had a most hardening effect upon the mind and spirit of the age; and, on the other, the best that can be hoped for from the rule of the State over the Church is to secure a uniform ecclesiastical condition, to the injury, as the history of Christendom has repeatedly shown, of genuine Christian faith and experience. Conformity will take the place of piety, and confession make light of conviction. Conscience will bow the knee to the Baal of political power. Let Judah, at war with Israel, call for the aid of Assyria, and she may expect to purchase victory at the price of some form of vassalage to her powerful ally.

The main features of the episcopacy, however—those, namely, of ordination, visitation, and general superintendence of the churches—have been perpetuated by the Lutheran Church of Germany unto the present time in the office of Superintendent.¹

this is the origin of the German State Churches." (Nuelsen, "Luther the Leader," p. 179.)

¹The views of the Lutheran theologians with respect to the episcopacy are

The Superintendent is the executive officer of the Consistory, which is a body of ministers and laymen appointed by the civil ruler to take general charge of all ecclesiastical matters.

In Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and some other European countries, the Lutheran Church has always had a properly episcopal government. In Sweden there seems to be no doubt that, like the Church of England, it has kept up the line of succession unbroken from the Roman Catholic bishops. Nowhere, however, has it regarded this or any other specific form of organization as mandatory or essential. Governmental forms are classed with the externalities and not with the essentials of the Church. Otherwise, no doubt, the Lutheran Churches generally in Europe and America would acquire, as they might so easily do, a line of ministerial ordinations from the succession of bishops in Sweden—or would have done so long ago.¹

It should be added that in European Lutheranism, contrary to its original principle, the laity have very little share in government.

2. ORGANIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA.

In America Lutherans appeared in considerable numbers at an early date. They came as lovers of liberty to seek a new home for themselves and their children, though it should be in a wilderness, free from the oppressive conditions of the fatherland. But for a long time their organization was extremely fee-

indicated in the Confession presented by certain German princes and the magistrates of two imperial cities to the Emperor at the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530: "Now our meaning is not to have rule taken from the Bishops; but this one thing only is requested at their hands, that they would suffer the gospel to be purely taught, and that they would relax a few observances, which cannot be held without sin." (Augsburg Confession, Part II., Art. 7.)

"The Apostolic legitimacy of the Swedish Episcopate is no more disputed than is that of the Church of England; and if this institution were deemed essential to the government of Christ's Church, or believed to have any inspired authority, the Lutheran clergy and congregations of this country could readily avail themselves of its benefits." (Prof. E. J. Wolf, in "Church Reunion," p. 98.)

ble. Was this a defective inheritance from their honored founder? It is certain, at any rate, that even the greatest of prophet-teachers or leaders transmit their defects and errors, as well as that which is wise and powerful and good, to succeeding generations. He who should refuse a position of leadership till practically sure that his work will suffer no discount and result in no harm or loss must refuse unto the end. Luther was not the same strong and indomitable path-breaker in matters of organization as in religious liberty and personal Christian faith. What wonder, then, if his American followers should have seen their way less clearly here than in some other directions? At least such was the fact. In the language of one of its present-day theologians, "Lutheranism in this country was for a century, if not 'void,' yet 'without form,' and 'darkness' brooded over its chaotic state. There was no organism: Lutherans were here, but hardly a Lutheran Church."¹ But a better day was dawning, which has long since brightened over the land. With the important negative advantage of freedom from any alliance with the State, this evangelical Church has had untrammelled opportunity to develop itself organically after its own ideals. So, it has vested much power in the congregation, and, following the example of the Reformed Church, has universally adopted synodical government. No distinct episcopal office has been instituted. But it has been made the duty of presidents of synods or of conferences, either personally or through others authorized by them, to ordain and install ministers, make visitations to the churches, and perform similar acts of general superintendence.² A more fully developed government—which, in the opin-

¹E. J. Wolf, *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, Art. "The Lutheran Church." "Organization," says Professor Wolf in this same article, "has never been a distinguishing glory of Lutheranism."

²"It is their [the presidents of synods'] duty to preside at synodical meetings, to present matters that require action, to propose candidates to vacant congregations, to perform or authorize the performance of official synodical acts, such as ordination, installation, visitation, etc. (though these latter functions are often specially assigned to the presidents of conferences), to execute discipline, and in general to be advisers of the synodical congregations." (*The Lutheran Cyclopedia*, Art. "Presidents of Synods.")

ion of some of its friends, would add strength to this "Church of the Reformation"—might assign such duties to a special superintendent, and make them, together with the preaching of the gospel, his chief or only official work.¹ But thus far in its history American Lutheranism has been distinguished by the strong and steady emphasis which it has laid upon liturgy, sacraments, and forms of doctrine, rather than by its forms of government.

Some of the Lutheran synods, or groups of churches, are independent—according to recent statistics, no fewer than twenty-four.² But the large majority are organized under one or another of the four higher representative bodies: The General Synod, The General Council, The General Synod of the South, and The Synodical Conference. It is the organization of the churches under the General Synod, which, however, does not materially differ from that which obtains under the other general governing bodies, that will here be noted:

There are three classes of church officers—pastors, elders, and deacons.

Pastors are elected by the congregation, and are held amenable for their conduct to the Synod of which they are members. All ministers are of one and the same order. They are licensed and ordained by the Ministerium; or, in Districts in which no Ministerium is held, by the Synod. A licentiate has authority to baptize and to administer the Lord's Supper, as well as to preach and to conduct public worship.

Elders are assistants of the pastor in government, discipline, and the general work of the church.

Deacons assist the pastor at the Lord's Supper, attend to the wants of the poor, and administer the temporal concerns of the church. Both elders and deacons are elected by the people, and may not serve less than two years or more than eight without reelection.

The Church Council is composed of the pastor, who is *ex officio* its chairman, the elders, and the deacons of a particular church. It is the function

¹"Their rights [those of the Superintendents of the Lutheran Church in Germany] are constitutionally assigned to presidents of conferences and synods in America. What is essential in episcopal functions is perhaps best preserved by separate existence, which must be well guarded constitutionally against Anglicanism and Romanism—i. e., wrong opinions of government, succession, and historic value and position." (The Lutheran Cyclopedia, Art. "Bishops.")

²According to the census of 1890, there were also 231 independent Lutheran congregations. (Wright, "Practical Sociology," p. 74.)

of the Council to receive members by vote into the church, and to exercise discipline in the form of admonition, suspension, and expulsion, and in general to care for the interests of the congregation. Any member may appeal from an unsatisfactory decision of the Council in his case to the Synod.

Conferences are meetings of the ministers within certain Districts into which a synod may be divided, for the purpose of preaching, consultation, and attention to any business that shall be referred to them either by the Synod or by a local congregation.

The Ministerium consists of the ordained ministers of a Synod, and may be convened either during the session of a Synod or at any other time. Its chief duty is to license and ordain ministers.

The Synod is composed of all the ordained ministers and licentiates, together with one lay delegate elected by the Church Council from each pastoral charge, within a certain prescribed District. In addition to its judicial duties, it must devise and execute various measures for the furtherance of the cause of Christ within its bounds. It meets annually.

The General Synod is composed of ministerial and lay delegates in equal numbers from the Synods. It meets biennially, and its powers are such as the following: To review the proceedings of Synods; to provide books of worship and catechetical instruction for the Church; to make provision, through the creation of Boards of Management and otherwise, for the missionary and benevolent enterprises of the Church; to promote harmony among the Synods embraced in its jurisdiction; and to be sedulously regardless of "every casual rise and progress of unity of sentiment among Christians in general, in order that the blessed opportunities to promote concord and unity, and the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, may not pass by neglected and unavailing."¹

3. RISE OF THE EPISCOPATE AMONG THE BOHEMIAN BRETHREN.

There is even an earlier reformed episcopate than that of the Lutherans. Sixteen years before Luther was born the first bishop of the Bohemian Brethren, or the Unity of the Brethren (*Unitas Fratrum*), was consecrated. The Brethren were followers of the noble Bohemian martyr, John Hus. The bloody Hussite war, in which Bohemia successfully resisted her Romanist enemies, had run its course. A national church, the Utraquists, or Calixtines—so called because they restored the cup in the Lord's Supper to the laity—had been established. But this

¹Form of Government of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; *The Lutheran Cyclopedia*, Arts. "Bishop," "Superintendent," and the like; Jacobs, "The Lutherans," in *American Church History Series*.

church after a time submitted to reconciliation to Rome and became extremely corrupt in both doctrine and practice.

It was under these circumstances that the modest undertaking of the Brethren began. Holding the doctrines of Hus, they proposed to carry on his work, as the Lord might open the way, accepting the Scriptures as their one rule of faith, and maintaining a godly discipline. Near the village of Kunwald, amid the forests of a narrow, secluded valley under the shadow of the Gratz Mountains, they found a place of retreat in a perilous time.

Their original intention was to form not a separate church, but rather a society in the Established Church. In the course of ten years, however, a synod was held in which a body of principles was adopted, and the determination reached to withdraw from the national Establishment and form an independent organization.

The ministers whom they elected received ordination from two Waldensian bishops, who had been ordained to their office by bishops of the Roman Catholic Church.¹ So, without prelatic or sacerdotal motive, but simply as a matter of order and expediency, this new line of Christian ministers put itself in connection with the historic line of tactual succession in the Church of the Waldenses and of Rome.²

Now what was the form of organization thus effected? It was that of an episcopate, together with an Ecclesiastical Council: five bishops (one being recognized as primate, or chief), and ten elders, some of whom were ministers and some laymen.

¹De Schweinitz, "History of the Unitas Fratrum," Ch. XVI.

²"The Synod was of opinion that in the times of the Apostles there had been no difference between a bishop and a priest, or presbyter, and that therefore the priests then present might proceed to set them apart for the ministry; that, however, in a very early period a distinction had been made, had been kept up by the Church ever since, and must not now be relinquished; and finally, that the ordination of their pastors ought to be such as the Calixtine and the Roman Catholics would be compelled to acknowledge." ("The Moravian Manual," pp. 10, 11.)

Compare Wesley's strong preference, in which Asbury and the American Conference shared, to have his preachers episcopally ordained, notwithstanding his conviction that the apostolic succession was a hopeless "fable."

Here, then, was a genuine "reformation before the Reformation." Naturally enough, therefore, when Luther and Calvin appeared on the scene, their Bohemian forerunners were brought into friendly intercourse with them.¹ And notwithstanding troubles, within and without, the Unity of the Brethren increased and prospered. Crossing the Bohemian border, it planted its churches in other countries. By the year 1557 it embraced a Province in Bohemia, one in Moravia, and one in Poland, each with its bishop and synod, and all three Provinces united in general synodical meetings. Later it gained legal standing—an acknowledged and influential Church, with theological schools and literature, and with many noble families in its membership.

This was the "Ancient Church." But its ecclesiastic enemies well-nigh swept it out of existence. After a history of a century and three quarters, in the Anti-Reformation under Ferdinand II., the Brethren, who meantime had become involved—not indeed as a church but in the person of some of their most prominent and politically influential members—in a political revolution, were broken up in Bohemia and Moravia by the most pitiless oppression. In Poland they maintained themselves a little longer, but gradually united with the Reformed Church. The Peace of Westphalia (1648), which ended the Thirty Years' War and placed the Lutheran and Reformed Churches on the same legal footing as the Church of Rome, did not include the Brethren in its provisions. So their multiplied calamities were greater than they could bear; and before the seventeenth century drew to a close, as an organization they had ceased to be.

But now came the period of the "Hidden Seed." For half a century the evangelic faith of the Bohemian fathers lived on, here and there, in secret places; and there were witnesses of Christ that could not be corrupted nor utterly suppressed. More-

¹"At the beginning of Luther's Reformation they numbered about four hundred parishes and two hundred thousand members, were using their own Hymnal and Catechism, and employing two printing presses for the spread of evangelical literature." (Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Art. "Moravian Church.")

over, there were prophetic spirits who looked forward to a better time, watchers for the morning when the Lord would restore to his suffering people their place and mission in the world. Most eminent of these was the aged Bishop John Amos Comenius, who revised and published the book of discipline (*Ratio Disciplina*) for the use of the resuscitated Church that was to be.¹

The chief agents in the resuscitation of the Unity of the Brethren were a count and a carpenter. In the early part of the eighteenth century the young Count Zinzendorf, on his estate of Berthelsdorf in Saxony, had solemnly covenanted to devote himself and all that he possessed to the work of the Lord. Not far distant lived Christian David, by trade a carpenter, by profession a member of the Brethren, and by indubitable divine vocation an itinerant evangelist. On an evangelistic journey in Moravia, Christian David met with certain descendants of the Brethren who were desirous to find a home where they might enjoy the religious liberty which was denied them in their own land. Through information given by him, the Count learned about these faithful Brethren, and offered them an asylum on his estate. "Let as many of your friends as will come hither," he said to Christian David; "I will give them land to build on, and Christ will give them the rest." Here, accordingly, they built the village of Herrnhut (in 1722-29), which is even yet the ecclesiastical center of the renewed Unity of the Brethren—or, as the Unity is more familiarly called, the Moravian Church.²

The little Church settlement prospered. German Pietists were attracted to it and received as members of the community. In five years there was a population of about three hundred. The

¹"While Comenius cared for the Brethren of the present, he kept in view the Church of the future also. That such a church would appear, either in the homes of his fathers, or in a strange land, he confidently hoped; and in order to prepare for its coming published several works which were to preserve the doctrines, ritual, and constitution of the ancient Unity." (*De Schweinitz, "History of the Unitas Fratrum,"* p. 601.)

²The name "Moravian Church" originated in the fact that the first comers to Zinzendorf's estate and most of those who came afterwards—in a word, the builders of Herrnhut—were from Moravia.

Ratio Discipline, adopted by a synod of the Brethren a hundred years before and revised by Comenius, was accepted as their book of government and discipline; the liturgy of their fathers was retained; and bishops of the renewed Church were consecrated by two bishops of the old episcopal succession, which had been perpetuated during the whole time of the Hidden Seed. Their first bishop was David Nitschman. The next was Zinzendorf himself; and on him the supreme government of the Church rested till his death, in 1760. Other bishops were elected as his assistants—Peter Böhrer, for example, who was connected so significantly with the rise of Methodism¹—and synods were held which were practically under his control. After his death, however, the synod took its proper place as the governing body of the Church; and a number of bishops and elders, "The Unity's Elders' Conference," were elected as a board of administration.

Zinzendorf's idea was that of "exclusive" church settlements. The State Churches, whether the Evangelical Lutheran, in which he himself had been reared, or the Reformed, must not be disturbed. Nevertheless they included in their membership a great many worldly people. Would it not be well, therefore, if at various points within their territory thoroughly evangelical communities might be established, under strict discipline, and kept apart from the secular and ungodly world round about them? For thus might the spiritually minded cultivate their own spiritual life, and at the same time send out evangelistic messengers, as witnesses of experimental Christianity, in the communities of the State Churches.

Let no person not of this evangelical and disciplined body be permitted to hold property in their villages. Let all material as well as spiritual pursuits and affairs be brought under ecclesiastical control. Here let the lamp of truth be kept brightly burning for all who might come to rejoice in its light; and from hence, with torches kindled in its flame, let its missionaries go forth. And so they did, not only among the churches, but afar

¹Snell, "Wesley and Methodism," pp. 52, 53.

among the heathen in the darkest and most wretched places of the earth.

Very attractive to the harassed soul is the thought of "sanctuary." Amid the incessant evils and antagonisms of the world, who has not felt its charm? One need not be as sad and susceptible as Cowper to dream of a happy seclusion in "some boundless contiguity of shade."

Lo, then would I wander far off,
I would lodge in the wilderness,
I would haste me to a shelter
From the stormy wind and tempest.¹

So, sure enough, the monastery rises in the wilderness, and opens its door invitingly. So the Pilgrim and the Puritan fathers in New England said: We have come to this far land for freedom and peace, and none but such as are like-minded shall dwell among us. So have socialist dreamers, out of heart with the imperfect organization and ideals of human society as it is, banded together to make the experiment of communistic colonies—Brook Farms, Harmonists, Amana Societies, and the like. So the peace-loving Quietist is prone, however unintentionally, to form the anti-social habit and walk his little round of life alone. So the devout and dreamy ecclesiastic lives in retreat, among his books, in his oratory, friendly perhaps with just a few congenial fellows, and goes forth for brief ministrations only to get back to retirement as soon as conscience will consent. So it would seem to many a sensitive Christian mind that it were a very heaven on earth to live in a community of Christians only, every house a house of prayer, every neighbor a brother of like faith and experience.² Such as this were to be the Moravian villages—and not on the Continent only, but also in England and America.

¹Psa. lv. 7, 8.

²"I would gladly have spent my life here in Herrnhut; but my Master calling me to labor in another part of his vineyard, on Monday, 14, I was constrained to take my leave of this happy place; Martin Döber and a few others of the brethren walking with us about an hour." (Wesley's Journal, August 12, 1738.)

But such are not the normal situation and surroundings of Christ's militant Church. Its place is in the forefront of the hardest battle of the ages. Not the place of its special representatives only, its Twelves or its Seventies, but its own place is there. Its Paradise Regained will not be found "in retreat." Its "exclusive settlement" is Armageddon.

Meditation, secret prayer, communion with God, the communion of saints—these indeed are ever needful. How can the Christian life be lived without them? Nevertheless, it is a life to be lived among men, in the spirit of human brotherhood and witness-bearing for the Lord Jesus Christ. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one." More truly Christian in its idea than any safeguarded church village is the "church settlement" of the modern city.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
Where men good and bad pass by.

Shall we think, then, of Zinzendorf's method as unpractical? Does it go aside from the New Testament method by putting the leaven too little in contact with the meal? If not, some other reason or reasons must account for the fact that the fair and noble Moravian Church presents to-day the singular picture of a church with more than fifty-two thousand communicants in mission fields and fewer than half that number at home.

Indeed, another reason has been offered—namely, the lack of a distinct effort, through Zinzendorf's influence and leadership, to build up a separate denomination, till the field, especially in America, had been preoccupied by other evangelic churches. But side by side, at least, with this explanation of meager growth, must be noted the mistake of the "exclusive settlement."

This Church, therefore, is of relative present importance chiefly because of its unparalleled missionary activity, and its long, eventful history. It may be recognized as the oldest episcopal Protestant Church in the world. It traces its bishops back in an apparently unbroken line through the period of the Renewed

Church, that of the Hidden Seed, and that of the Ancient Church, to the ordination of Matthias of Kunwald in the year 1467.¹

4. EARLIER AND LATER MORAVIAN EPISCOPAL FUNCTIONS.

The Moravian episcopate, during the period of the Ancient Church, and more especially during Zinzendorf's time, was a strong administrative office. Since then its only peculiar function seems to have been that of ordaining to the ministry. Bishops, however, in virtue of their office, have special privileges of membership in the governing bodies.²

The home territory of the Church is divided at the present time into four Provinces—namely, the Continental Province, the British Province, the American Province, North, and the American Province, South.

There is a General Synod, which meets normally every ten years. Other governing bodies are the Provincial Synod, the District Synod, and a Mission Board to which is committed the supreme administration for missions among the heathen. The executive officers of the General Synod are the Unity's Elders' Conference; and of the Provincial Synod, the Provincial Elders' Conference. Bishops of Mission Provinces are elected by the General Synod; of the Home Provinces, by the Provincial Synods.

The ministry exists in the three orders of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons. The Deacons are authorized to administer both the sacraments; and they are promoted to the presbyterate when appointed to take charge of a congregation or of some particular department of church work. Brethren in-

¹"The claim of the *Unitas Fratrum* to a valid episcopacy is important as a historic and not as an essential question. It is not based upon the idea that episcopal ordination is alone legitimate. The Church still occupies the catholic standpoint of the fathers, upholding fellowship with evangelical Christians of every name; the prayer which was fervently uttered, four and a quarter centuries ago, amidst the mountains or Reichenau and in the hamlet of Lhota, is still repeated: 'Unite all the children of God in one spirit.'" (De Schweinitz, "History of the *Unitas Fratrum*," p. 152.)

²"Their [the Moravian bishops'] office carries with it no ruling power in the Church. Their special function is ordination of ministers. Their office, moreover, is defined to be 'in a peculiar sense that of intercessors in the Church of God.' . . . It [the Moravian polity] has allowed the Church to enjoy the advantages of a confederal form of government, giving marked preference to the Headship of Jesus Christ over the Church in all its proceedings; it has enabled it to recognize the validity of Presbyterian ordination." (Prof. W. N. Schwarze, "The Moravian Church and the Proposals of the Lambeth Conference," in the *Church Quarterly Review* (London), October, 1909.)

trusted with the direction of finances may also be ordained to their office as Deacons—"after the Apostolic example."

In the forms of worship the golden mean between uniformity and spontaneity has been most excellently observed. The ritual is comparatively brief. Much liberty is given for extemporaneous prayer. Prayer meetings and love feasts are held. And this church has the distinction of being the first of all the Christian churches to put a hymn book into the hands of its congregations—its first hymnal, edited by Bishop Luke and composed of both original hymns and translations from the Latin, bearing date of the year 1505.¹

¹The Moravian Manual.

VI.

THE EPISCOPAL IDEA: SCRIPTURAL, EXPEDIENT —LATER FORMS.

WHEN, in the year 1739, a few persons in the city of London came to a presbyter of the Church of England and fellow of Oxford University for spiritual guidance, the man whose help they sought was not only an earnest Christian teacher but also a singularly gifted organizer. Not inappropriately did he, together with his comrades in the first little brotherhood of which he became the acknowledged leader—though he was not its originator—bear the nickname of *Methodist*. It was preëminently his gift from God to plan, to systemize, to organize, to rule, to take the lead in the administration of governmental affairs. Said his friend and colaborer, George Whitefield: "I should but weave a Penelope's web, if I formed societies." Not so Wesley: he was no less a former of societies than a preacher of the gospel. If ever a man was given to organizing Christianity, his own and others', it was this man. And his web has not yet been unwoven.

Accordingly, in the case of these humble religious inquirers in London, a result followed of which neither they nor their chosen spiritual guide could have had the slightest prevision. He made an arrangement to meet them regularly at a certain time and place for prayer and counsel; and this was the beginning of the various organizations of the Methodism of to-day.

Nor does there seem to be any good reason to believe that these Christian organizations, with their millions of members and their world-wide work, would ever have come into existence but for the life of this one man. Had the overlooked six-year-old boy perished in the flames of the Epworth rectory in 1709, there might well have been an Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century, but that form of Christianity known as Methodism would not have been.

It is true that, under the directive and enabling hand of God, the progress of the world is chiefly through the spirit of an age. The advance is made through ideas, convictions, aspirations, and endeavors that are somehow shared by many men in many circumstances and positions. It is a slow, evolutionary though at the same time personal process. The creative forces come into ascendancy through insensible increments from numberless sources and periods of time. The individuals in whom they appear most conspicuously are not so much their originators as their products and representatives. Therefore it is not difficult to imagine, for example, that Christianity would have become the religion of the Roman empire under some later emperor, if Constantine had not espoused its cause; that there would have been an evangelical reformation, if Martin Luther had never lived; that America would have been discovered, if Columbus had suffered shipwreck on his first voyage; that the American Colonies would have won their independence, if George Washington had fallen in the battle of the Monongahela; that the printing press and the telephone would have been invented, if Gutenberg's and both Bell's and Edison's experiments had proved failures. These men were indeed opulent and original forces in human affairs; but there are men who were more distinctly *personal* in their achievements—men without whom, so far as we can judge, the great movements for which their names stand would never have taken place. Such a man in the history of religion was Mahomet; such a one in political history was Charlemagne; and such a one in modern Christian organization was John Wesley.

I. ORIGIN OF INSTITUTES OF METHODISM.

Through the labors of Wesley and Whitefield, the itinerancy as a method of an evangelistic ministry received an unprecedented development.¹ For Methodism, we have to remember, was

¹One hardly needs to be reminded that an itinerant ministry was no really new thing at this time. Sundry more or less significant examples of it may be noted; such as, in the first years of Christianity, that of the

aggressive, and the itinerancy is distinctively a policy of aggression. English Christianity in the eighteenth century was on the defensive; and Wesley's plan of defense—so far as he had any—was that of a well-planned and untiring *attack*. Great was the success of it. Converts were won and societies gathered throughout the land. In the fellowship of these societies preaching gifts appeared: impulse of utterance took the form of exhortation and the pungent application of the gospel—in such men as John Nelson and various others. Wesley, after some hesitation, getting the better of early prejudices and rigid churchmanship, gave his sanction to the lay preachers and undertook the direction of their labors. Like him, they must be itinerants, going to and fro from congregation to congregation, from neighborhood to neighborhood, from circuit to circuit.

But after conquest comes culture. It has been said: "The sword may conquer lands, but it is the plow that retains them." In the metaphor of the apostle Paul, the Christian people are "God's tilled field."¹ The evangelist, wielding the word of God as a sword, may win them; but it is only through continuous and careful spiritual husbandry that they can be held and made rich in "fruit unto holiness." How, then, could such a result as this be reached under the Wesleyan system of evangelism? Partly through what pastoral preaching and spiritual care the traveling evangelist was able to give; but chiefly through the development of a new class of caretakers. Men originally appointed in the local societies to collect the weekly dues were also made soon afterwards spiritual overseers. They became the real pastors of the people—each with a very little flock which he could watch over and care for individually.

Was it well that plain, unschooled men should be thus intrust-

Apostles and their fellow-preachers, and of the "apostles," "prophets," and "teachers" of the sub-apostolic age; in the Middle Ages, that of the Anglo-Saxon monks who were sent out by the bishop from the monasteries in which they had their training and their home (Southey, "Life of Wesley," I. 262), and the Dominican and Franciscan brothers; in later times, Wyclif's "poor priests."

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 9, *margin*.

ed with the spiritual care of other plain, unschooled men? Before making answer let us remember that the young Sunday-school teacher may more readily succeed than the better instructed older one in winning the attention and the heart of the young; that the native Christian worker may gain a hold upon men of his own race and former faith such as would be impossible to the foreign missionary; in a word, that the most welcome human help is often not that which is sent from afar, or that which is somehow dropped down from a height, but that which is given by a brother walking with us in our own ways of everyday life.

So the numerous Methodist under-shepherds were appointed; and this was the beginning of the class-meeting.

During the first half century of their existence, the Methodist societies of Great Britain knew but a single ruler. All offices, rules, and regulations were of Wesley's own institution. In him rested the power to admit into membership in the societies and to exclude therefrom; to appoint and remove stewards; to receive preachers and to appoint them to their circuits or dispense with their assistance. Briefly, in him personally was to be found all legislative, judicial, and executive authority. His visitations and oversight of the societies were an almost incredible example of faithful, untiring activity. And this was the beginning of the Methodist episcopacy.

A few clergymen of the English Church sympathized with Wesley from the outset in his evangelistic undertakings, and rendered him more or less assistance. In the year 1744 he invited some of these and some of his own lay preachers to meet him in consultation about the work in which they were so deeply interested. In all, there were six clergymen and four lay preachers who thus met together. This was the beginning of the Methodist Conference.

Such a meeting of preachers was held annually from that time forth. And it was literally and solely a *conference*. Questions were proposed by Wesley as president, and a free interchange of views asked for; but there was no voting. As the abbot of a Benedictine monastery—if one may go so far afield

to find an analogue—must call a council of the monks for consultation on all important matters of business, and then take upon himself the responsibility of the decision, so the Chair in a Methodist Conference, wishing to be advised, not governed, decided every question on his own responsibility. Consciously or unconsciously, the military idea dominated Wesley's administrative thought. He was commander of an evangelic army: the conference was simply his council of war. He continued to appoint the preachers to their fields of labor and to remove them from place to place, as seemed expedient. The chapels which began to be built were deeded to him as a lifetime trust. All things were in the hands of the peerless providential Leader, under whose direction the movement began, and whose absolute authority was resigned only on the bed of death.

What then? A self-perpetuating legal conference—the “Legal Hundred”—which should succeed to the trusteeship of the Society's property, and as far as possible take the place of the departed patriarchal ruler, had already been provided for. This Conference came at once into power; and it has been the governing body of the Wesleyan Methodists unto the present time.

2. GROWTH OF METHODIST ORGANIZATION.

It must not be forgotten that during Wesley's lifetime the Methodist societies, or, as they were called collectively, the United Society, were not in the full sense of the word a church. They were rather, like the early Moravians, a religious guild or fraternity of Christian men and women banded together for mutual watch-care and encouragement in working out their salvation. It was their purpose and rule to observe the ordinances and as far as possible with a good conscience to obey the canons of their national Church. Wesley strenuously resisted the idea of their separation from it, because it might both serve them and be served by them. For the most part contemned by its authorities, they were, nevertheless, a body of life-bearers which it greatly needed. For the Church of England in that age

seemed unable to find any better motto for its own activities than *No enthusiasm*. It had grown strangely inert.

Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?

It was Wesley's aim, accordingly, to vitalize and strengthen the existing Establishment, to call it forth into the thick of the "war with evil," and not to form a new church. Hence he habitually spoke of his followers as "the people called Methodists"—simply a "people" and simply "so-called" Methodists.

But in the latter years of his life, after making provision for an independent and fully equipped Church in America, he did set apart several of his preachers in Scotland and England to the office of presbyter, for the administration of the sacraments, and one, Alexander Mather, to the higher office of superintendent. It would seem that by this time he saw the inevitableness of a separation from the Church of England, and did what he could in the most appropriate and orderly manner—though inconsistently with his membership and office of presbyter in that Church—to provide for the administration of the sacramental ordinances in the prospective Church of the Methodists.

If, however, this be the correct interpretation of Wesley's course of action, the Conference after his death did not fully carry out his design. It did authorize the administration of the sacraments in such societies as voted, through their stewards, class leaders, and trustees of chapels, to have them. And by this act it broke the connection between the members of these societies and the Established Church, to which most of them, if in any proper sense church members, belonged. Thus the whole United Society became, in the course of about twenty years, a fully constituted church; for it was already "a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God was preached," and it now had also "the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that are of necessity requisite to the same." But twenty years more passed before

(in 1836) it ordained its ministers by the imposition of hands. And as to the Superintendency, it never gave any recognition to such an office.

The government of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the parent body of English Methodism (the other bodies need not here be considered), has become an elaborate and well-compacted system. Not classifiable under any one of the three generally recognized types of ecclesiastical polity, it shows a real affinity with both the Presbyterian and the Episcopal. As to ministerial orders, it is wholly Presbyterian. But it also includes, in its President of the Conference, in its Superintendent of the Circuit, and especially in its Chairman of the District, some genuine features of the episcopate.

The Conference (or Legal Conference, or Legal Hundred), which is the one legislative body and the supreme court, meets annually. When vacancies occur in its membership, they are filled, partly by seniority and partly by election, from the whole body of ministers. But the Conference, in what is called its Pastoral Session, associates with itself certain other ministers, who are appointed by the District Synods; and it is in this Pastoral Session that men are nominated to fill the vacancies—the nominations being confirmed by the Conference itself.

There is also the Mixed Session, in which the Conference sits with a number of other ministers and an equal number of laymen—all appointed by the District Synods.

The duration of a Conference Session is limited to three week—the first week being given to the Pastoral Session, and the remainder of the time to the Mixed Session. Business pertaining more particularly to the office of the ministry—such as ordinations, the division of circuits, and the stationing of ministers—is transacted in the Pastoral Session; business of a more general character—such as home and foreign missions, chapel funds, education, temperance—in the Mixed Session.

The Conference sits only in either the Pastoral or the Mixed Session—never alone. But no action is valid unless approved by the Conference itself.¹

¹It would seem indeed that according to the present practice the Conference does very little legislation of any kind except at the suggestion or in ratification of the action of the Pastoral or the Mixed Session. "It exercises no independent power. It is practically a mere registering machine, the instrument by which the decisions of the Conference as a whole [in Pastoral or Mixed Session] are translated into legal terms." (Fitchett, "Wesley and His Century," p. 399.)

The territory of the Conference is divided into Districts, over each of which is placed an administrative body known as the District Synod. It is composed of all the ministers and certain lay officers of the District—the laymen considerably exceeding the ministers in number. It meets twice a year, and its principal meeting, which is in the month of May, lasts from two to five days. At this meeting there is first a ministerial session in which, among many other items of business, the character and work of the ministers and Conference probationers of the District pass under review, candidates for the ministry are examined, the increase or decrease in church membership is noted, and reports of home missions are received. At the close of this session there is a joint meeting of ministers and laymen for financial business. The other semiannual meeting of the Synod is in the month of September, and is wholly occupied with matters of finance.

All the pastoral charges are arranged in the form of Circuits, each embracing several societies, or churches—in some cases the number reaching as high as twenty-five or thirty. The Circuit has its Quarterly Meeting, consisting of the stewards, the class leaders, the local preachers of one year's standing, the trustees who are members of the church within the circuit, and representatives of the Sunday schools. It is presided over by the Superintendent, or minister in charge of the circuit. In these Quarterly Meetings the statistics of membership, the amount of money paid by the classes, and the amount received by the ministers on account of salary, are reported, and the whole work of the Circuit is considered. The Quarterly Meetings of many Circuits number more than a hundred members—of some not fewer than two hundred.

Each Society has one or two Society Stewards and one or two Stewards for the Poor. These, together with the Class Leaders and certain elected representatives of the church membership, constitute the Leaders' Meeting, which is the pastor's council. Both Stewards and Class Leaders are nominated by the Superintendent and elected by the Leaders' Meeting. Besides the Stewards of the Societies there are Circuit Stewards, whose office has reference to all the societies of the circuit collectively.

The President of the Conference is nominated in the Pastoral Session and elected by the Conference. His office is for one year only, and he is not eligible to reelection within a period of eight years. He is intrusted with authority to supply any vacancies that may occur in pastoral charges in the interval of the Conference, and with the general oversight of the Church. He also conducts the service of ordination, in which, together with certain other ministers, he lays his hands upon the head of the candidate for orders.

Chairmen of Districts are elected by the Conference in its Pastoral Session. It is their duty to convene and preside over District Synods, to act as chairmen of various District sub-committees, and under certain circumstances to visit the circuits. The District Chairman has larger powers in his sphere than are vested in the President. He is to be "the ear and the eye, the hand and the mouthpiece of the District as well as of the Conference, in dealing with preachers and people, with ministers and Circuits."

In the Superintendent of a Circuit is vested the power to receive persons into membership, and to exclude from membership; but only after consultation with the Leaders' Meeting.

Candidates for the ministry must be first of all recommended by the Quarterly Meeting on nomination of the Superintendent. They are then examined by the District Synod, and after that by a committee appointed by the Conference—the "July Committee," which meets annually in London and Manchester. Having been accepted by the Conference, the candidate is sent to a theological institution for a three years' course of study—or, if the institution be full, he is appointed to a Circuit as a preacher, to serve till a vacancy shall occur. At the close of his course of study he is eligible to reception as a probationer into the Conference. The period of probation is four years; but the last of the three years in the theological institution may be accepted as the first year of probation. On the reception of the probationer into full membership in the Conference he is ordained elder. There is no diaconate.

Local preachers, who serve without the slightest pecuniary compensation, are numerous and active.¹ They have their places on the plan of the Circuit, side by side with the itinerant preachers. A few days before the session of the Quarterly Meeting they hold a meeting of their own for Christian fellowship and consultation. It is out of their goodly company that the ranks of the itinerant preachers are recruited.

Pastoral appointments are made by the Stationing Committee, which consists of the President and the Secretary of the Conference, one representative from each District, and some other members. The limit of the pastoral term is three years—a limit fixed in the Charter of the Legal Hundred, which can be changed only by act of Parliament. Three years also must elapse before reappointment to the same charge.

The Stationing Committee has a meeting a week or ten days before the session of the Conference, at which it makes out a complete list of appointments. These are printed and published before the meeting of the Conference, and are also read to the Conference twice, being all this while subject to revision. Then a third draft is made and read, which is final.²

3. OTHER METHODIST EPISCOPATES.

The episcopal idea has appeared, in similar forms to those of British Methodism, in Canada, the United States, and Japan.

¹"It is estimated that of the 28,000 sermons preached in the Wesleyan pulpits of Great Britain every Sunday fully 20,000 of them are preached by 18,000 lay preachers. There is no complaint *there* of a scarcity of preachers when the laymen go forth two by two as when our Lord sent out other seventy also." (Bishop E. R. Hendrix, *Christian Advocate* (Nashville), November, 1907.)

²Williams, "The Constitution and Polity of Wesleyan Methodism."

The Methodist Church (of Canada) is under the supervision of one or more Itinerant General Superintendents, who are elected by the General Conference for a term of eight years, and are eligible for reelection. The General Superintendents "shall travel at large throughout the Church, and shall have the general oversight of all Church interests and institutions, and do all in their power to forward them, and render such service as the General Conference shall direct." They preside over the sessions of the General Conference, and in the interval between its quadrennial sessions, act in various matters, in its name.¹

In the Methodist Protestant Church episcopal oversight is represented by the Presidents of the various Annual Conferences.

The President is elected annually by the Conference, and is eligible for five successive elections. He presides at the sessions of the Conference, and during the interim visits the pastoral charges, presides at the Quarterly Conferences, makes changes with the consent of pastors and people in pastoral appointments (these having been made by the Annual Conference), provides for the administration of sacraments where necessary, appoints missionaries, oversees the work of the pastors.²

The Methodist Church of Japan (Nippon Methodist Kyokwai) dates the beginning of its history, as an autonomous body, in May-June, 1907. Organized by a conference of delegates from the Japan Mission Conferences of the two Methodist Episcopal Churches of the United States and the Methodist Church of Canada, it has chosen forms of polity similar to the forms of these three churches in America.

The government of the Church is vested in a quadrennial General Conference composed of equal numbers of ministers and laymen, elected by the ministerial and the lay members, respectively, of the Annual Conferences.

There is a General Superintendent (Kantoku), elected by the General Conference—which has power to elect as many as are

¹"The Discipline of the Methodist Church" (1906), pp. 50, 51

²"Constitution and Discipline of the Methodist Protestant Church" (1908), pp. 28, 29, 120, 121.

needed from time to time—and intrusted with the same functions, though in a somewhat modified form, as those of the general overseers in American Methodism. His term of office is eight years, and he is eligible for reëlection.

The territory of the Church is divided into Annual Conferences and these into Districts. The Districts are under the oversight of Presiding Elders (Bucho).

The Presiding Elders of each Annual Conference are nominated—by ballot and without debate—by the Conference, and appointed by the Kantoku. They may be reappointed for four successive years; and after four years of service in some other position are eligible again for nomination and election as Presiding Elders.

The Kantoku also appoints the preachers to their pastoral charges and fixes the boundaries of the Districts; but in both cases only after consultation with the Presiding Elders.

The ideal of this little pioneer Church of Jesus Christ in Japan is shown in the closing sentence of the Historical Statement prefixed to its book of Discipline: "The sole object of the rules, regulations, and usages of the Nippon Methodist Kyokwai is that it may fulfill to the end of time its divine vocation, as a leader in evangelization, in all moral and religious reforms, and in the promotion of fraternal relations among all branches of the Church of Jesus Christ."¹

And the awakened Island Empire shall wait for His law.

4. EPISCOPACY THROUGH EVANGELISM.

Evangelism may easily prove to be incipient episcopacy. The Christian preacher, going forth with the word of salvation to various communities, will not soon forget those who are led to Christ under his ministry; and especially where, as in a mission field, new congregations have been gathered. It will be in his heart to visit them again, to keep in communication with them, to send them such help and such helpers as may be available. So

¹"The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church of Japan, 1907;" "Journal of the First General Conference of the Japan Methodist Church."

the apostle becomes a chief pastor. "Let us return now," says the apostle Paul to Barnabas, after their evangelizing tour in Asia Minor, "and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare. . . . And he went through Syria and Cilicia, *confirming* the churches."¹

True, it was to local church officers that the apostle Peter gave the charge, "Tend the flock of God which is among you;"² but what charge had been given to Peter himself, who was to be an itinerant witness-bearer and missionary, and not a local church officer? It was the very same, and immediately from the Master's own lips: "Tend my sheep."³ Such was an Apostle's episcopate. He cared for the souls and for the multiplying congregations that had been given him. Absent or present, through pen and tongue, he would continue his ministrations to them, as God gave ability. The epistles to Timothy and to Titus have been called "pastoral;" but in a different and deeper sense the apostolic epistles generally are pastoral epistles. They are the fatherly and authoritative communications of a Christian pastor to this or that distant flock.

This principle of episcopacy through evangelism is not without its modern exemplifications. Notably illustrated by the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century, in Wesley's relation to the United Society, it found a similar, though less conspicuous, illustration among the Germans of America in the rise of the United Brethren in Christ.

5. OTTERBEIN AND THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

The congregations of this Christian brotherhood began to gather, chiefly through the labors and influence of one man, Philip William Otterbein, during the latter part of this same century.

Otterbein came to America at the age of twenty-six years as a missionary of the Reformed Church in Germany. For the

¹Acts xv. 36, 41.

²1 Pet. v. 2.

³1 John xxi. 16.

last thirty-nine years of his life (1774-1813) he served as pastor of what was practically an independent congregation ("The German Evangelical Reformed Church") in the city of Baltimore. But his connection with the Church of his fathers in which he had been born and reared and ordained to the ministry (and of which his father, his grandfather, and five of his brothers were ministers) was never broken.

In his earlier ministry, while a pastor in Pennsylvania, Otterbein was led into a clear and satisfying knowledge of the grace of God in the forgiveness of sins. The gospel became to him, as never before, the power of God unto salvation, and his preaching a personal and living message. He felt constrained to declare it, not to his own congregation only but wherever he might gain a hearing. The dearth of vital religion in the churches, and the needs of the unevangelized poor, especially in rural communities, offered him the opportunity, which seemed to impose the obligation, of special evangelistic undertakings.¹

Meantime Martin Böhm, a Mennonite preacher, had entered upon a similar course of evangelism among the uninstructed and the poor. "We are brothers," exclaimed Otterbein on his first meeting with his less cultured but no less gifted and zealous Mennonite brother. Through their preaching many souls were brought into the experience of a faith and joy like their own. Other preachers, also, who seemed to be called of God, were raised up here and there.

As the movement went on, Otterbein and his co-laborers would meet together from time to time for consultation concerning its significance and its management. This was the initial step toward organization. But there was no intention as yet of form-

¹"The lack of ministers was very great, and the people were everywhere clamoring for religious instruction. . . . In Maryland it was deplorable, and sometimes seemed to be hopeless. The only practical expedient seemed to be to enlist the laity in the devotional work of the Church." (Dubbs, "History of the Reformed Church, German" (American Church History Series), p. 309.)

ing a new ecclesiastical body.¹ Indeed, had the existing churches made provision for the nurture and direction of this new life which was arising in various parts of their territory, both these older churches and the revivalists' congregations might have secured a needed benefit; and separation would probably have been prevented. But no such fostering official care was offered them. On the contrary, they were set at naught, and left to their own leaders.²

Of the general apathy of the churches of the time there can be no doubt whatever. So, in the present instance, there was the contact of a religion of observances or of indifference with a genuine, if sometimes ill regulated, religious enthusiasm—of snow with fire.

When, in the year 1800, the new society did become a separate ecclesiastical organization, under the name of The United Brethren in Christ, it was a most logical result that such men as Otterbein and Böhm, recognized as true fathers in God, should be asked to continue the supervision of the work which had grown up chiefly under their hands. Accordingly an episcopal form of government was adopted, and these two chief evangelists were elected as the first bishops of the organized evangelistic Church.³

¹"Step by step, and without any purpose on his part to form a new and separate religious denomination, Mr. Otterbein was led onward in a course which, under the shaping hand of Providence, ultimately led to this result. . . . Like Mr. Wesley, the leader of the movement which gave Methodism to the world, he was disposed to cling to his mother Church; and, in fact, he never did formally separate himself, nor was he by any formal action of the coetus ever separated from the German Reformed Church." (Berger, "History of the United Brethren in Christ" (American Church Series), p. 328.)

²"When it became evident that a life which was foreign to the Reformed Church was in course of development, many ministers and churches gradually withdrew from this well-meant evangelistic movement" (Dubbs, "History of the Reformed Church, German" (American Church History Series), p. 312.)

³"Otterbein and Böhm traveled much, visiting various charges, and directing the ministers in their work, sending them on tours to different places as exigencies demanded. . . . When the first of the regular succession of Annual Conferences was held, that of 1800, these men, Otterbein and Böhm, were accordingly elected and fully authorized to perform in an official

The present government of the United Brethren, who have become almost wholly a Church of English-speaking people, is largely democratic. Even the delegates, both ministerial and lay, that compose the General Conference, which is the lawmaking body of the Church, are elected by the people. Women are eligible to membership in this body, and also in the regular ministry of the Church.

The ministry exists in one order only—that of the eldership. Bishops are chosen by the General Conference, and for a term of four years, subject to indefinite reelection;¹ and are not set apart to their office with any form of ordination. They preside over the Conferences, both General and Annual. Each bishop is assigned to a district consisting of the territories of several Annual Conferences—at present from six to thirteen—by a committee elected for the purpose.

The Church territory is divided among the Annual Conferences, which are composed of ministers, both itinerant and local, and lay delegates—one of the latter for each pastoral charge.

The territory of an Annual Conference is divided into districts under the supervision of Presiding Elders elected by the Conference.

The method of pastoral supply is that of the itinerancy. Pastors are appointed to their charges by a Stationing Committee, which consists of the presiding Bishop and the Presiding Elders of the preceding year, together with any that may have been elected to succeed them. The appointee has the right, in case of dissatisfaction, to appeal to the Annual Conference—a right, however, which is rarely exercised. The pastoral term, originally one year, then extended to two, then to three, is now without limitation.²

A still later representative of the idea of scriptural and expedient episcopacy is The Reformed Episcopal Church, organized in 1873. "This Church recognizes and adheres to Episcopacy, not as of divine right, but as a very ancient and desirable form of church polity."³

way the work they had so long done in an unofficial way." (Berger, "History of the United Brethren in Christ" (American Church History Series), p. 364.)

¹"Bishop Glossbrenner was elected for ten successive terms, after which, being no longer efficient, he was elected bishop emeritus, his death occurring two years after." (Berger, "History of the United Brethren," p. 365.)

²Discipline of the United Brethren in Christ (1905).

³"Declaration of Principles of the Reformed Episcopal Church."

VII.

THE EPISCOPAL IDEA: AMERICAN EPISCOPAL METHODISM.

THE idea of a scriptural and expedient episcopate has received its strongest embodiment in American Methodism. As we have seen, the patriarchal or autocratic form, which it assumed first of all in the person of Wesley himself, gave place in the British Islands, at the close of his personal administration, to a government by the Conference, with no marked episcopal features. But in America the course of development was conspicuously different. Here the Conference became supreme before the venerable founder's death, while on the other hand the episcopal office was retained with much of its original power, responsibility, and opportunity. It is this latter development which we are now, as briefly as may be, to trace.

I. THE CONNECTIONAL IDEA.

Let us think, then, of a few scattered Wesleyans in the American Colonies in the sixth decade of the eighteenth century. Among them are three local preachers—Robert Strawbridge a small farmer, Philip Embury a carpenter, and Captain Thomas Webb a battle-scarred soldier of the British army. Societies began to be formed, converts gained, "preaching houses" built or bought.

How shall these societies be governed and inter-related? Conceivably each little congregation might manage its own affairs, with no recognition of any outside authority or supervision. Meantime new congregations of like faith and order would be established, all self-governing and self-propagating, but all in more or less fraternal association with one another. This would have been the way of the Independent or the Baptist. But the Wesleyan formative idea was that of connectionalism, not that

of independency. So the American Methodists sent an urgent request to Wesley, three thousand miles away, to provide them with ministerial service. Wesley, on his part, felt the responsibility of a pastor toward "these poor sheep in the wilderness." They were exposed to false doctrine, to laxity of discipline, to many perils from which it was incumbent upon him, as far as possible, to protect them.

Not only so, but they represented an opportunity to do a larger work in the New World, to which he could not blamelessly be indifferent. The aggressive spirit of evangelism, of the Christian soldiers' league "offensive and defensive" which he would fain have formed, appealed to him. For the abiding vision of the Holy War which had caught Wesley's eye was not that of the conquest and re-conquest of a single elect Mansoul. It was that of conquering in love the rebellious multitudes of his own and other lands, even of the whole world, to the obedience of the Lord Christ who had died for their salvation. And here in the American Colonies was a continental mission field.

Accordingly a missionary volunteer, Richard Boardman, was appointed by Wesley as his "assistant," or superintendent of societies, in these Colonies.

There was but one pastoral charge, or circuit. Its name appears in the minutes of the English Conference of 1770 as "America;" and of this wide but almost wholly uncultivated field Boardman took the oversight. He was superseded, after two years, by Francis Asbury. But as the number of societies increased, other circuits were organized, and a "general assistant," Thomas Rankin, was appointed to take charge of the whole work. Afterwards, on Rankin's return to England in the beginning of the War of the Revolution, Asbury, by the choice of the preachers and the subsequent recognition of Wesley, became general assistant. He was not superseded and he never quitted the field—the man of the hour had come.

The proposed form of government was an extension to America of the polity of British Methodism. Wesley's authority must be supreme, here as there. The general assistant, as his repre-

sentative, was to call the Conference together, preside over its deliberations, decide every question that might be brought before it, and make the appointments of the preachers to their fields of labor. He might be removed from office and recalled to England, and any one else or no one at all appointed in his place, at any time. And to this absolute personal government the preachers agreed for a little more than a decade.¹ As to the people, there was no thought of giving them any share in governmental affairs.

Now is this to be classed as a scriptural and expedient procedure? Shall evangelic church government, like Romanism, offer an example of no other individualism than that which it exemplifies by the concentration of all its powers in a single individual? Its advocates would certainly search in vain for a precedent in the New Testament. Nor could they, on any reasonable ground, plead for its recognition as a model method of government for the Church of Christ.² Let it be remembered, however, that no such pleas were ever put forward in its behalf. On neither side of the Atlantic was Wesley as yet consciously building a church. He was only organizing societies for spiritual culture and the publication of the gospel, supplementary to the Church of England. Besides, the practical, rather than any theoretical, aspect of the question was that which chiefly deter-

¹"On hearing every preacher for or against what is in debate the right of determination shall rest with him [Asbury] according to the Minutes" (Action of the Delaware Conference, 1779.)

This, it is true, was the action of an irregular body, not properly a "Conference" at all. But it seems to have fairly embodied the principle on which the Conference acted in all its sessions—excepting, of course, those of 1778, '79, '80, at which Asbury did not preside—till the regular session of the year 1784, inclusive.

²"When we follow the course of events to which Wesley, from year to year, and with so much address and tact conformed himself, it is quite easy to see how and under what influence he was led so to construct his society, and so to organize its legislature, and its judicial and its administrative council, as in fact nullifies, nay, puts contempt upon, the very first principle of a true Church organization." (Isaac Taylor, "Wesley and Methodism," p. 239.)

mined the course to be followed.¹ For a more practical man than the founder of Methodism has never lived. Great was his love of truth, but only for the sake of life. As a leader and law-maker, he was ready to acquaint himself "not only with that which is most perfect in the abstract, but also that which is best suited under any given circumstances."² With no preconceived set of institutions or system of government for his societies, he simply availed himself of such means and measures, from time to time, as seemed to be demanded by the existing conditions. One after another early prejudices were dismissed, as obstructive to the requirements of the work which had been given him to do. So the autocratic administration of the societies, beginning as it did in the simplest possible manner, was perpetuated and extended because it kept proving itself so effective.

The strong and saintly soul on which this administration rested did not desire it. On the contrary, inconsistent as it might seem with his unfailing practicalness, there was much to incline Wesley to a life of retirement. He was devout, studious, in young manhood afraid to expose himself to the temptations of ordinary society, bent upon the saving of his own soul. Had he waked into consciousness two or three centuries earlier he might have sought refuge in a monastery—and founded ere long a great monastic order.³ But the task which by such manifest

¹Compare the government of the famous Sunday school of Dr. Stephen H. Tyng in New York City: "In my early years as a Sunday school worker I wrote to Dr. Tyng, asking for a copy of the constitution of his Sunday school. He gave me a prompt and courteous reply, but said he was sorry he 'could not come.' Dr. Tyng was his own Sunday school constitution. The power could not have been lodged in a wiser, more generous, more affectionate, or more positive heart and will; but it is a good thing that this autocratic idea does not prevail in the modern Sunday school." (Vincent, "The Modern Sunday School," p. 40.)

²Aristotle, "Politics," IV. 1.

³"Indeed, for a long season the greatest pleasure I had desired on this side eternity was

'Creeping silent through the sylvan shades,
Exploring what is wise and good in man.'

And we [his brother Charles and he] had attained our desire. We wanted

tokens was appointed him of God, how could he refuse to do it? "Not for all the gold of Arabia," said Thomas à Kempis, "would I have the care of souls for a single night." The devout and morally sensitive recluse would not choose it, on any consideration, for himself. But the very keenness of conscience that bade him turn away trembling from the thought of such a charge must, if sound and healthy, constrain him to accept it when manifestly given of the chief Shepherd of souls.

2. THE QUESTION OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Yet the question was inevitable, How long are the societies to be held in their present ecclesiastical status? Did not their circumstances, at least here in America, call imperatively for an ordained ministry and the administration of the sacraments? From the time of the first Annual Conference, in 1773, and even earlier, this was a vital and ever-recurring question.

The seal of Divine approval marked the labors of the itinerant evangelists and their local fellow-workers. Like the early Christians, they were for the most part unlearned men, but not without charisms of prayer and song and soul-moving speech. Like them, they came to be regarded as hot-headed separatists from the Church of their fathers, and were honored with abundant ridicule and scorn—"everywhere," in the Christian churches and outside, "spoken against." In fact, they stumbled no little; but they also found the scripture fulfilled which saith that, while "the bows of the mighty men are broken," "they that stumbled are girded with strength." With no pretension to the accomplishments of the biblical scholar or the trained theologian, they did know the supreme fact of personal experience, and it was

nothing. We looked for nothing more in this world when we were dragged out again, by earnest importunity, to preach at one place and another, and so carried on, we knew not how, without any design but the general one of saving souls, into a situation which, had it been named to us at first, would have appeared far worse than death" (Wesley, "Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," III. 18.) Compare Luther's avowal at the beginning of the Reformation: "I wish to live in quiet, and I am hurried into the midst of tumults."

this they told in the Holy Spirit and in power: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." Such was the typical Methodist preacher of that pioneer time. No idolatry of a church, old or new, but the love of human souls as re-conditioned and revealed in Christ, was the passion of his life. Conference, the itinerancy, the appointing power, organization—these all were valued only as making a way through which the spoken gospel might have free course. Organization must wait upon evangelism, not evangelism upon organization.

All the while the number of converts was increasing from hundreds to thousands; and in the class meeting they were being trained for holy and useful lives. But there was no sacramental administration. No one could be baptized by the Christian preacher through whom he had made profession of faith in Christ. The people could not receive the Lord's Supper at the hands of the men whose evangelic ministrations had brought them into communion with their Lord. And the rectors of the Church of England, to whom the Conference had commended them for the sacramental ordinances,¹ were almost without exception unsympathetic toward their spiritual experience, and in most cases altogether worldly or openly immoral in conduct. For many of them parishes had been secured in this country because they were so idle or so profligate as to be unendurable at home.² They were "blind mouths" or worse. What should be done? It was a critical situation.

¹"1. Every preacher who acts in connection with Mr. Wesley and the brethren who labor in America is strictly to avoid administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. 2. All the people among whom we labor to be earnestly exhorted to attend the Church, and to receive the ordinances there; but in a particular manner to press the people in Maryland and Virginia to the observance of this minute." (Minutes of the first American Conference, 1773.)

²Evidence of this bad state of things is indisputable:

"The progress of ecclesiastical affairs was from bad to worse. Such was the result of the absence of all proper government and the presence of place-men eager for spoils, instead of priests eager for souls. The predominant idea of a State Church threw its baleful shadow over the spiritual estate of the

In war-time, the societies in America being cast upon their own resources, the Conference, at its meeting in Fluvanna County, Virginia, in the year 1779, appointed a presbytery, and solemnly set apart certain of its senior members, with prayer and the imposition of hands, to administer the sacraments. One year afterwards, however, at the earnest entreaty of Asbury and others, this administration of ordinances was discontinued. Not that any doubt was felt as to the validity of the presbyterial ordination that had been given; but it was a different form of ordination from that to which as *quasi* members of the Church of England the Methodists had been accustomed. And more especially it had not received the sanction of their revered leader. Therefore, the Conference now agreed to wait until communication could be had with Wesley, in hope of some more satisfactory solution of their problem.

Such a solution was reached at the close of the war. In the United States of America the Church of England did not and could not exist. Wesley had already appealed in vain to the bishop of London, in whose diocese the Colonies were included, to ordain a presbyter for the American Methodists;¹ and now

colonies. There was but a form of godliness, which denied the power thereof. 'The Roman Catholics and dissenters' looked with contempt upon an Establishment so profligate in some of its members that even the laity sought to purify it, and yet so weak in its discipline that neither clergy nor laity could purge it of offenders' (Maryland MSS from archives at Fulham)

"The incomes would average two hundred pounds per annum. Yet all the controversies of the clergy turned on this point of their living. Nothing spiritual or intellectual, no problems of theology or questions of efficient administration, had awakened their interest. 'No wonder,' writes Dr. Hawks, 'that such a bastard Establishment as that of Maryland was odious to so many of the people; we think their dislike is evidence of their virtue.' And no wonder that the Methodists, who now came in, swept the country" (Tiffany, "History of the Protestant Episcopal Church" (American Church History Series), pp 71, 78)

¹"Wesley besought Lowth, Bishop of London, to ordain at least two priests who could administer the sacraments to American Methodists. It is doubtful if any single action of a bishop has ever been more fruitful for evil than his refusal." (McConnell, "History of the American Episcopal Church," p. 170.) Whatever the spirit or the apparent unwisdom of this episcopal action, as to its "evil" results opinions will differ.

any lingering hope of relief from that source was cut off. As to the ceremony of ordination, he had long been convinced that the right to perform it belongs to presbyters and not to bishops as such. Accordingly in September of the year 1784, assisted by Dr. Thomas Coke and the Rev. James Creighton, presbyters of the Church of England, he ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to the office of elder, for service in America.¹

But Wesley was a firm believer in the propriety and effectiveness of the episcopacy. Much as he objected (for easily appreciable reasons) to his American superintendents' calling themselves by the title "bishop"—which they did soon after the organization of the Church—had he not long embodied the reality, even in an ultra form, in himself? and had he not practically set up the office already in America in the person of Rankin and of Asbury?² Moreover, it had proved to be singularly serviceable; it was full of promise; it could not now be dispensed with. The plan of ministerial service, therefore, was completed by the ordination of Dr. Thomas Coke to the superintendency of the American societies, with instructions to confer the same office upon Francis Asbury, and the office of elder upon such American preachers as might be thought sufficient, together with those ordained by Wesley himself, to supply the present need.

At a country church, Barratt's Chapel, in the woods of Delaware, Coke had his first meeting with Asbury, and told the object of his coming. But here arose a question: Should the Conference have any voice in this matter? There is no good reason to believe that Wesley intended that it should even be called together. It was enough that Coke should act under his authority, ordaining Asbury to the superintendency, as directed, and both choosing and ordaining other preachers to the order of elders;

¹Cf. the proposal of Dr. William White, pp. 424, 425.

²"Ques. Who are the persons that exercise the episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America? Ans. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession." (Minutes of the American Conference of 1789.)

and then that the government should go on, a purely personal government, as before.

Such, however, was not Asbury's view of the situation. His thirteen years' experience in America had probably made it evident that here the Conference must be supreme. Let the preachers say whether or not they will adopt the proposed form of administration; let them, if they will, elect their own deacons, elders, and superintendent, accepting Wesley's nominees as simply nominees, and thus by their own action organize the societies into a completed church. As for himself, Asbury was unwilling to accept the superintendency on Wesley's appointment alone. He must be chosen thereto by the free suffrages of his brethren. He would not be leader of an unwilling band of fellow-workers.

Besides, to be chosen both by Wesley and the American preachers would make his own position more secure; for he could not then be recalled to England (as already had at one time been done) at Wesley's will. Did, then, the personal motive of perpetuating his own leadership influence Asbury's call for the vote of a general convention? Doubtless the man who possesses a distinct gift of leadership and command finds the exercise of it, like the exercise of any other natural power, enjoyable. All normal activity reacts in pleasure. But it would be a reckless criticism that should accuse the character here in question of unholy ambition. By every token, the work of Christ as called for at his hands was first in Francis Asbury's thought. But it is equally certain that such work seemed to have been already given him in an honorable but hard and perilous position of general oversight. If Fletcher of Madley could decline the office of successor to Wesley himself in Great Britain, and write to Wesley that the proposed recommendation to the Methodist societies for such a position would make him mount his horse "and gallop away," it requires but little of either imagination or charity to suppose that his contemporary and kindred spirit, the homeless Asbury, should be similarly unselfish in his desire to continue in his present extraordinary and toilsome office.

But whatever may have been the general assistant's motive, he then and there struck Wesley's plan for the government of the Methodists of America a blow that foretold its death. Government by a man began forthwith to give way before government by law.¹

Accordingly, at Asbury's instance, a conference, or organizing convention, of all the preachers was called; and by the action of this conference, which met in Baltimore on Christmas eve, 1784, the organization of the church, under Coke and Asbury as its superintendents, was effected.² And the official name that was given the new ecclesiastical body told the importance of the superintendency in the thought of its organizers, *The Methodist Episcopal Church*.³

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUTONOMY.

That Wesley's office, so manifestly extraordinary, should be perpetuated anywhere, whole and entire, was out of the ques-

¹"When Asbury exclaimed, as Thomas Ware declares he did, 'Doctor, we will call the preachers together, and the voice of the preachers shall be to me the voice of God,' he struck the knell of personal government, and rung in the era of government by the Conference." (Neely, "The Governing Conference in Methodism," pp. 252, 253.)

²"When the Conference was seated, Dr. Coke and myself were unanimously elected to the superintendency of the Church. . . . We spent the whole week in Conference, debating freely and determining all things by a majority of votes." (Asbury's Journal, December 24, 1784.) *Determining all things by a majority of votes*—the mark of a most significant new departure in American Methodism as organized.

³It could hardly be thought unfitting that the superintendents should call themselves "bishops" when the Church had already been named—what it undoubtedly was—"Episcopal."

"The Church thus organized was an Episcopal Church: (1) by expressly chosen title; (2) by the sure and certain testimony of contemporary documents and witnesses; (3) by the preceding affiliations of the Societies and their founder and American leaders; (4) by its threefold ordinations, first in England and then in America; (5) by virtue of the nonexistence of an Episcopal Church in this country at the time of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, this nonexistence being expressly assigned as the sufficient reason for creating this Church. It was not a secession. There was nothing to secede from. It was not a schism. There was no episcopally

tion. Even though his unique personality, with its combination of administrative genius, holiness of character, and well-nigh incredible industry, could have found a successor, his relation to the societies was in the nature of the case impossible of repetition. "For though ye should have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers."

Then, too, the Methodist people were making progress in many ways. At first with few exceptions laboring men and women, uneducated, unused to the responsibilities of leadership, ready to be governed as well as taught, they rapidly increased not only in numbers but also in Christian knowledge and strength of character. In the preachers of the Conference a like development of mind and will was realized. For it was no repressive priestly regimen under which they had been placed, but the free, genial, godly fellowship of brethren. They were growing in knowledge. For they must read, must study the Scriptures, must confer with one another, must declare their message continually—and "if you want to know anything, go and teach it." They must be incessant in doing all manner of good as opportunity offered. And the striving after such an ideal meant not only the enlargement of a brotherhood but equally the growth of the Individual. It meant greater independence of action and fitness for the functions of administration. It meant the end of the paternal autocracy—for "what makes a man of a child is excellent, but what makes a child of a man is evil." Hence the more liberal and elaborate system of polity in British Methodism (and, unhappily, the divisions that wasted its strength) soon after the founder's death. Hence, also, the autonomy of American Methodism before his death.¹

organized body of Christ in America in which to create a schism." (Tigert, "The Making of Methodism," p. 67)

"It would be admitted by all that it would be simply absurd to give to a newly gathered Church of South African troglodytes, or Ceylonese tree-lodgers, or Australian savages, the same powers and functions which have been exercised by the Church of a Jay or a James in England. . . . Now, these extreme cases prove the principle . . . But, in proportion as the lasty of a Church advance in intelligence and the discipline of Christian culture,

One's work, whether it be great or small, is continually passing beyond one's power. Neither the "dead hand" nor the living hand can reach forth and control it. Even should it take the form of a strongly organized body, it will be subject to unforeseen changes of far-reaching significance. "My order is too much for me," lamented Francis of Assisi. "I was a little surprised," said John Wesley, "when I received some letters from Mr. Asbury affirming that no person in Europe knew how to direct those in America." In these two particular cases, however, there was a noteworthy difference. Francis's order was departing from him in the way of hierarchical control and of unenlightened faction and strife; Wesley's trans-Atlantic Conference was departing in the way of personal responsibility and reasonable self-government for Christ's sake and the gospel's. He was venerated as no one else, either "in Europe" or on the whole earth by his American followers, and Asbury next only to him. The preachers in Conference assembled were more than willing to accept the Superintendent as their president, and to receive appointments at his word. But the supreme governing power must be lodged in the Conference itself.

It is true that the organizing Conference of 1784, not rudely breaking with the past, adopted a resolution of submission to Wesley's governing authority: "During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to church government to obey his commands." By this very action, however, the Conference implicitly claimed the liberty to choose for itself. If at some subsequent session it saw fit to depart from this rule, which was not of the nature of a covenant, that too was within its power. And as a matter of fact, three years afterwards it was done: in 1787 the resolution of submission was rescinded, the name of Wesley as chief superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church was

it is fit and right that they should be taken into closer and more frequent association with the ministry in Church councils and decisions." (Riggs, "Connectional Economy of Wesleyan Methodism," pp. 109, 110.) The principle is applicable as truly to a body of preachers as to the people.

left off the Minutes, and instructions received from him to elect Richard Whatcoat and Freeborn Garrettson to the superintendency were disobeyed. Thus was the ecclesiastic independency of American Methodism fully asserted and established.

4. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

At the meeting called for the organization of the Church in 1784 not quite sixty preachers were present, and the whole number of Conference members was only eighty-one. Fewer than one-fourth of this number, however, were elected and ordained elders; and some of these were appointed to mission fields outside the United States. It was the elders' duty to supply the people with the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. With this design the circuits were arranged in groups of from two to six each; and over each such district, or group of circuits, was appointed an elder. He must visit every society in these circuits, preaching as he went, but with the special official function of administering the sacraments.

It occurred, however, as the number of ordinations in the Conference increased, that preachers in charge of circuits were in some instances themselves elders; and so the minister in charge of the district came to be distinguished as the *presiding* elder.

But was not his office now becoming unnecessary? This would have been the case but for the fact that the office, almost if not quite from the very beginning, had developed functions that were probably not included in its original design. The presiding elder, somewhat like the archdeacon of the earlier medieval or the present English Church, became the bishop's assistant, to represent him on the district in his absence, and to give him at all times needful information concerning the state of the work. Thus the presiding eldership speedily developed into a lesser superintendency, or episcopate, under the general superintendency of the bishops. In the Discipline of 1786, not two years after the organization of the Church, it is laid down as the official duty of the elder "to exercise within his own district, during the absence of the superintendents, all the powers invested in them for the

government of our Church.” And in the Discipline of the next year we find included in the definition of this office the following duties:

1. To travel through his appointed district.
2. To administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to perform all parts of divine service.
3. In the absence of a bishop to take charge of all the deacons, traveling and local preachers, and exhorters.
4. To change, receive, or suspend preachers.
5. To direct in the transaction of all the spiritual business of the Church.
6. To take care that every part of our Discipline be enforced.
7. To aid in the public collections.
8. To attend his bishop when present, and give him when absent all possible information by letter of the state of his district.

Such was the presiding eldership in the second stage of its development; and through a somewhat stormy history, such essentially it has ever since remained.¹

In the year 1792 the regular, or quadrennial, General Conference was organized. Being composed substantially of the whole body of itinerant preachers, its powers were unlimited. It could annul any law of the Church or enact any additional law, create or abolish any office, take from or add to the Articles of Religion, by its own sole and immediate action.

Sixteen years thereafter the Delegated General Conference was instituted. Its powers were limited.² It could not of itself make any constitutional change in the economy of the Church.

¹In the Methodist Episcopal Church the title was changed by the General Conference of 1908 to that of *District Superintendent*.

²They were made to include all subjects of legislation except six, which were safeguarded by six Restrictive Rules. One is reminded, by way of contrast, of the Constitution of the country in whose religious life this young “Church of the people” was to play so large a part. The Constitution of the United States confines the powers of the general government to the subjects which it specifies, and leaves legislation on all others to “the States respectively or to the people.” (Constitution, Amendments, Art. X.) The Church constitution forbids to the General Conference certain things, and permits all things else; the national constitution permits to Congress certain things, and forbids all else.

Such a change must still be made by the whole body of itinerant ministers: not now, however, as assembled at one time and place, but first, through their elected delegates at the General Conference, and then, in their own person at the meetings of the various Annual Conferences. And with this institution, the Church, as to both its ministry and its legislative council, in all their main features, may be regarded as having completed its organization—with one significant exception.

5. LATER FORMS OF ORGANIZATION.

Not for more than half a century thereafter were laymen intrusted with any part in legislation. Even then they did not demand it as a right; and never before had it been imposed upon them as a duty. As for the explanation, it will not be found in any extraordinary indifference on the part of Methodist laymen to the work and progress of the Church. For their peculiarity, in comparison with the laymen of other communions, was rather that of unusual activity. They were local preachers, exhorters, class leaders, personal workers, leaders in devotional meetings.

Nor would it be a fair explanation to assert that the ministry, through love of power, were unwilling to accord to the laity their proper rights and opportunities; for by no such spirit of unrighteousness were they dominated. They showed the heart not of a lord but of a brother toward all their brethren. How was it, then? They were only bearing the responsibility that seemed to be laid upon them in the providence of God. From the hands of their apostolic founder the government had passed easily and naturally into their own. They had administered it in the fear of God and for the good of the people; signal prosperity had attended their administration; and they saw no reason to believe that lay representation, especially as not desired by the laity, would be an improvement. On the contrary, it seemed hazardous and enfeebling. The fact that other Protestant churches had it—even the Protestant Episcopal Church, daughter of the Church of England, according to laymen a large share in its government—and that it suited the genius of American civil institutions, count-

ed for little or nothing. Methodism was *sui generis*, and in its peculiarities lay the secret of its success.¹

Upon this exclusive ministerial government a side-light may be thrown from the Methodist plan of pastoral supply. Has a Christian preacher a right to go and to stay where he pleases with his ministration of the gospel? Undoubtedly; but he may follow his judgment and conscience with equal fidelity in putting himself under the control of the chief officers and representatives of the Church, to be sent where they will. Has a congregation a right to select the pastor under whose ministry they shall sit? Undoubtedly; but they may also rightfully waive this right for satisfactory reasons, and accept the pastor appointed by some higher authority in the Church. Has a man the right to a determining voice as to the amount of pecuniary compensation he shall receive for services rendered? Undoubtedly; but he has the right also to forego this right, as the Methodist preacher does—*pro majorem gloriam Dei*—and let the amount of compensation be determined by those whom he serves. Who shall deny to ministers and people the free exercise of such Christian rights as these?

Here, then, appears the way of the Methodists. Its fundamental principle was not a claim but a sacrifice, the right of love to live its life, mutual self-surrender by preacher and people for the sake of the common good. And was it a very strange thing that this same principle should be permitted to determine the question of the layman's participation in church government?

Soldiers are honored, despite the fact that on occasion they must injure or even kill their fellow-men. They are honored because of their willingly surrendering the right to life itself, which all men hold so dear, at the call of their country. They are honored because, in the face of grim and terrible death, they

¹"The authority exercised by Wesley through his lieutenants was that of a commander-in-chief in time of war. The Methodist society was on a war basis, and perhaps no more efficient fighting machine was ever devised." (Heermance, "Democracy in the Church," p. 74.)

are faithful both to obey and, if their office require, calmly to command the obedience of others. Said the Roman soldier at the greatness of whose faith Jesus marveled: "I also am a *man under authority*, having *under myself soldiers*." And while military organization is far indeed from being a perfect type for either Church or State, it does illustrate the principle that, while insistence upon a right is sometimes a good thing, holding a right in abeyance for the sake of a cause may be distinctly better. Beyond controversy, better, inasmuch as the supreme law of life is not insistence upon *rights* but the service of *love*. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

But the Conference, still guided by its ideas of practical efficiency, was gradually reducing the power of ministers and adding to that of laymen. Originally, for example, the preacher in charge appointed his own stewards; afterwards they were elected by the Quarterly Conference on his nomination. Originally he could at his own discretion give license to exhort or to preach; afterwards it must be given by the Quarterly Conference. Originally he could himself expel a member from the church; afterwards it must be done by a committee of laymen.

But the movement in this direction was checked by what seemed an indiscreet and passionate attempt to increase its speed. This attempt was the agitation of the question of lay representation and kindred measures, which led to the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church in 1830. Another generation must now pass before the ultra-conservatism which was strengthened by this event would admit of the participation of any others than the itinerant preachers in church legislation.

At the present time laymen share equally with the ministerial delegates, in both Methodist Episcopal Churches, the powers and duties of the General Conference.¹

¹"The act of the body of the ministry in the Annual Conferences and of the ministers in the General Conference in providing for lay delegation has been pronounced the most remarkable instance of the voluntary relinquishment of power to be found in the history of the world." (Neely, "The Governing Conference in Methodism," p. 434.)

6. THE BISHOP'S POWER.

Notwithstanding such democratic changes as these, there is one of Wesley's powers that has been transmitted in its entirety to the Methodist Episcopal bishops of the present day—namely, the appointing of preachers to their fields of labor. Theoretically this power is unlimited, save by the limitation of the pastoral term, where such limitation exists. On his sole responsibility, a bishop, either at the session of an Annual Conference or in the interval between its sessions, may remove any pastor from his charge and send him to any other in the Church. In point of fact, however, such appointments are not made *ad interim* without the consent of the pastor himself, or else in case of extreme necessity; and at the Conference session the bishop is assisted in making the appointments, according to a custom that has acquired the force of law, by the presiding elders in council. Here, moreover, the wishes of preachers and people, as well as the demands of the common cause, are carefully considered.

But a more distinct and positive safeguard than any of these customs is the law, that if a preacher refuse to fill an appointment he is accountable not to the bishop but to the Annual Conference only. Not to his bishop, who can neither prescribe nor inflict a penalty, but to his Conference, of whose sympathy he is sure, every preacher stands or falls.

Still the appointing power may, on theoretical grounds, be easily objected to. The closet philosopher would almost certainly disapprove of it. The critic may lay down what seems to be a fatally damaging argument against the committal of such extraordinary authority to any human being. But practically this authority has approved itself, in the general effect, as a benefaction to both pastor and congregation, and an element of great effectiveness in the operations of the Church.¹

¹Among the suggested modifications of the offices of superintendency, one of the most reasonable would seem to be that the presiding elders of an Annual Conference shall be constituted in law the advisory council of the bishop, and that no pastoral or other appointment shall be made during the session of Conference, except in open council.

7. IS THE EPISCOPATE IN METHODISM AN "ORDER?"

The episcopate, in the current Methodist terminology, is not an order but an office only. In the explanatory note prefixed to the Form of Consecrating Bishops in the Methodist Episcopal Church, it is explicitly stated: "This service is not to be understood as an ordination to a higher Order in the Christian ministry, beyond and above that of Elder, or Presbyter, but as a solemn and fitting Consecration for the special and sacred duties of Superintendency in the Church." Hence the word "ordain," which is used in the service for the setting apart of deacons and elders, is nowhere used in this service.

What, then, is an order as contradistinguished from an office in the Christian ministry?

(1) It has been defined in the Church of Rome—at least in the case of "Holy Orders"—as *a ministerial office the ordination to which confers upon its recipient a specific grace, or spiritual power*, which no layman can possess. This power has reference particularly to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Reaching its perfection in the priest, it qualifies him to perform the miracle of transubstantiation. But some measure of it is imparted to the lower Holy Orders—namely, that of the deacon and that of the sub-deacon, and even to the four Minor Orders.

This sacerdotal belief is also professed, as to its essence, though otherwise more or less modified, by sacramentarians outside the Roman communion.

It need not here be taken into account.

(2) An order might be defined as *a lifetime ministerial office set forth and sanctioned in the New Testament*. Under this definition, how many of these New Testament ministerial offices may be counted? The Congregationalist, the Baptist, the Presbyterian, and the Lutheran would answer, One; the Protestant Episcopalian, three; the Episcopal Methodist, two. These, then, must be accounted orders; while all other lifetime ministerial offices, not being able to claim New Testament sanction, shall be called offices only.

It should be noted, however, in passing, that as a matter of fact it would be an impossible task for any of the above-mentioned churches—or indeed for any present-day church—to show that its lifetime ministerial office or offices are set forth and sanctioned in the New Testament. For such lifetime ministerial offices as are there set forth and sanctioned have no proper representatives in modern churches. True, their formative ideas remain in the Church; but the forms and functions in which the ideas originally appeared have nowhere the same official embodiment now as then.

(3) An order might be defined as *a ministerial office that confers authority for the administration of a sacrament*. Accepting this definition, Episcopal Methodism would still show the same two orders in her ministry—deacons being authorized to baptize and presbyters to administer the Lord's Supper.

Here, too, however—and even more obviously than in the case just considered—no specific New Testament authority, either in the form of command or of precedent, could be claimed for these two orders. For what New Testament congregation ever required ordination, or office-giving, as a prerequisite to the administration of either baptism or the Lord's Supper?

(4) An order might be defined as simply *a lifetime ministerial office*. Under which definition Episcopal Methodism would count, thus far in her history, three ministerial orders.

Now to those who hold that the Christian minister is not a priest, and that no form of government, whether it appear in the New Testament or not, has been made universally and perpetually binding on the Church, this distinction between order and office would seem to render a more than doubtful service. Because it is liable to be understood as involving some idea of sacerdotalism, or at least of an exclusive divine right. So, therefore, all use of the ecclesiastical term "order," which is both non-Scriptural and vague, might, with perhaps more gain than loss, be discontinued.

At any rate, the confusion of thought which has sometimes at-

tended the subject may, without difficulty, be avoided by an exact definition of terms. Is it asked, then, whether the Methodist episcopacy be an order or simply an office? Take the pains to avoid all trickery of words, define the term "order"—and the question is answered.

8. EPISCOPAL LIMITATIONS.

✓Bishops have no legislative function. They are moderators, but not members of the lawmaking council of the Church—offering no motion or resolution and casting no vote. So the distinction is here clearly drawn between prelacy and episcopacy. The prelate is a lawmaking bishop. Thus, even in that very mild form of prelacy that is represented by the Protestant Episcopal Church, there is a house of bishops coördinate with the house of deputies in the supreme legislative body. Without the concurrence of the bishops, therefore, no law can be passed. But the Methodist episcopacy represents the proper episcopal office of oversight and administration without the addition of legislative powers.

Nor do the bishops of Methodism have any voice in the condemnation or the acquittal of a minister on trial, whether it be for personal or for official misconduct. Neither are they entitled to any option as to who shall be admitted into the ministry: they can ordain no one either as deacon or elder until he shall have been elected to the office by the Annual Conference; and they must ordain such as have been duly elected. The power of ordination is invested in them as a matter of orderly arrangement, not of divine right. In fact, it is the Conference that both elects and through its chosen representative ordains.¹

For such as the foregoing reasons, therefore, the Methodist General Superintendency, notwithstanding its investiture with

¹Note the language of the Form of Ordaining Elders and of Consecrating Bishops in the Methodist Episcopal Church: "The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Ghost for the office and work of an Elder [or Bishop] in the Church of God, now committed to thee by the authority of the Church, through the imposition of our hands."

the power of appointing pastors, has been called a "*moderate* episcopacy."

The bishops are officially coördinate. No one of them may exercise the least authority over the others, or be charged with any duty from which the others are exempt. Each is an itinerant *general* superintendent—the Missionary Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church being the only exceptions—and is expected to preside over all the Annual Conferences, at home and abroad, in his turn, according to a plan of visitation agreed upon at the annual Bishops' Meeting.¹

There could hardly be a grander ecclesiastic idea than that of such a superintendency, authoritative, brotherly, world-wide. In its practical working, however, it must submit to severe limitations. No man during the few years—say, from ten to twenty-five—of his tenure of the episcopal office can become, in fact as well as in name, a general overseer of a world-wide church. Great is the difference even between Wesley's visitation of the United Society of Great Britain, or Asbury's and McKendree's itinerancy through the territory of eight Annual Conferences in a rude new country, and the twentieth-century Methodist bishop's circuit of the globe.

If the claims of ecclesiastical unity should permit, the lessening of territorial jurisdiction would make the general superintendency more serviceable because more real.

9. POWER OF THIS POLITY.

Notwithstanding the discount of numerous faults and shortcomings, of maladjustments, imperfection of details, failures in administration, Episcopal Methodism has been the marvel of American Christianity. Making its start without material, in-

¹"Such an office and such officers are unparalleled in the history of ecclesiastical government. . . . Its freedom from difference and dissension, its harmony of counsel and unity of wise and energetic action, are a continuous condition *sine qua non* not only of its efficiency but of its very life. Should these characteristics be permanently lost, the office as it has existed must perish." (Tigert, "The Making of Methodism," p. 7.)

tellectual, or social advantages, more than a century later than any other of the principal Christian denominations,¹ it has overspread the land with its churches, schools, missions, literature, and people, and pressed its way into other lands, with unequaled energy and effectiveness.

Now if these be the acknowledged facts of its history, they call for some candid examination of its economy. For without stumbling into the fallacy of false cause, we may believe that its successes are due, in an appreciable degree, to the forms of organization and activity under which they have been won. Looking sympathetically, then, at the structure and methods of Episcopal Methodism, we shall not find it difficult to note such traits as the following:

1. Its *adaptiveness*. All growth is conditioned upon a continual readjustment of the life within to the world without. And Methodism has not been mechanically constructed: it has grown. No man or set of men said at its inception, Go to, here is a perfect architectural design, let us build an ecclesiastical city, and a tower that shall reach to heaven. There was no plan drawn beforehand, either with or without "specifications." This vigorous Christian agency may best be described not as a building but as an enlarging inner life finding successive uniform methods of outward expansion. The various features of its economy were evolved, as the need of them was felt, in the circumstances and opportunities of the time.

So, likewise, will its future success depend, in large measure, upon its power to adapt the one Christian gospel and the one Christian experience, in their methods of aggression, to the new conditions that are ever arising. Only let it remember that this remolding of institutions by their informing ideas is not the

¹The case is put very mildly in the text. In point of fact, early American Methodism was severely discredited by all the older Churches. "Hard by the Dutch church stood a smaller and less pretentious chapel [John Street Methodist Chapel, New York City] on whose worshippers Episcopalians and Dissenters alike looked down with horror not unmixed with contempt." (McMaster, "History of the People of the United States," Vol. I., p. 56.) The instance seems to have been fairly typical.

work of a day. Normally a slow and gradual process, it calls for the patience of hope as well as the labor of love.

(2) Its *strongly ministerial character*. Not officialism, and not popular claims and prerogatives, but ministration is emphasized. Not the rule of the bishop nor the rule of the layman, but the Conference of ministers and preachers—the evangelical ministrative element—has always been most prominent.

As to its ministers, none are unemployed; as to its pulpits, none are vacant.¹ Appointments to the pastorate are made under a recognized law, which avoids the two congregational evils of the indefinitely long endurance of an unfit incumbent of the office, and the rending of a church in the effort to effect a change. There is not a moment's inter-regnum: the same word that ends one pastorate sets up another.

This method of pastoral supply affords the people variety and fullness of Christian preaching, gives the preacher a regulated opportunity to use his resources and accumulated materials in a new field,² and tends to the revival of interest and activity in the church.

Moreover, the position of the minister is assured by the Conference, not by the people, and is therefore most favorable to

¹"Unemployed ministers lying around promiscuously, hunting for a job, committees on pastoral supply bombarded with testimonials and with letters of recommendation, and sometimes disgusted with the shameless scrambling of applicants, Churches going pastorless for months, sampling an endless series of prospective pastors—all these abominations exist among us. It is not that we Baptists have any monopoly of this wretched business, but surely our Churches are suffering, and will continue to suffer from these evils unless they themselves apply the remedy." (Dargan, "Ecclesiology," p. 186.)

²"The merely physical influence of frequent change of scene and the animation that arises from contact with fresh congregational surfaces—if so we may speak—and the opportunity afforded to active-minded preachers to amend their style in entering upon a new circuit, and, not the least among these advantages of itinerancy, that knowledge of mankind which it may impart, all tend to promote the preacher's improvement, to give him a just confidence in himself, to render him fearless of individual countenances, and to fix upon his ministrations a character of force, animation, and freshness." (Isaac Taylor, "Wesley and Methodism," p. 219.)

fidelity in declaring the whole word of God and in administering discipline in the congregation. Like a prophet of old, he is sent rather than called; and all that can be done is done to free him from the temptations of fear and of favor, that he may fully declare his Master's message.

Here, let us imagine, are a hundred churches to be supplied with ministers as preachers, pastors, administrators, leaders in Christian enterprise. Here, on the other hand, are a hundred ministers ready for such service. Traveling to and fro continually among churches and ministers, making acquaintance with them all, are also a company of five or six superintendents, whose duty it is, according to a voluntary agreement between both parties, to appoint these ministers to these churches. Now is it less or is it more likely that a better adjustment of the workers to the work will be made than if each of these hundred churches, large or small, strong or feeble in resources, should have to seek out and persuade into acceptance its own minister, among the many, employed and unemployed, throughout the land? Undoubtedly there is a significant difference between the two polities. Which would seem to be, upon the whole, the more economical of ministerial forces?

(3) *Its utilisation of lay workers.* In the earlier days the minister was almost wholly an evangelist: the class leader was the local pastor. Always the ideal, variously embodied, has been the working church.

(4) *Its unity.* Not only the Conference but also the two features of organization that chiefly distinguish Episcopal Methodism from other ecclesiastical polities—namely, the itinerancy and the general superintendency—are notable bonds of union. The ministers, passing regularly from charge to charge, are influential, as servants of the whole body of churches, to prevent congregational exclusiveness or isolation, and promote oneness of interest and endeavor. As to the itinerant general superintendency, its superiority, from the standpoint of unity, to a diocesan episcopate, or any other historic form of episcopal (not papal) government, will hardly be denied.

(5) Its *organized aggressiveness*. All its forces may readily be concentrated, under authoritative personal leadership, upon home evangelization, church extension, foreign missions, education, temperance, or any other imperative Christian cause. It is preëminently a church militant, an army under strong command, ever on the march or in the field.¹

10. PERILS.

But an enlightened criticism will also charge Episcopal Methodism with defects which show corresponding perils:

(1) Its connectional organization offers peculiar temptations to strong-willed men or clever ecclesiastical politicians, whose spirituality may be corrupted and whose usefulness more than impaired by the passion for prominence and power. "Every cowl may dream of the tiara." Under a congregational government the opportunity of ecclesiastical ambition, with its subtle self-delusions and its fateful effects, is reduced to what would seem to be its lowest dimensions, while under a strongly centralized and officered government it reaches its maximum.²

(2) It asks of its bishops and presiding elders, in making their numerous nominations and appointments, a wisdom, impartiality,

¹"Among Protestants we may compare with our Churches the compactness and power of the Methodist Church. In admiring the system and energy which characterize the Methodists, let us not overlook the fact that both their Churches and individuals here and there protest vigorously when their independence is invaded by the power of the governing body. Perhaps they show a greater efficiency in actual work, but do they not lose a certain freeness and spontaneity?" (Dargan, "Ecclesiology," p. 144.) The lack of "freeness and spontaneity" can hardly be called a notable defect of Methodism, while its "system and energy," though very far below what they ought to be, may nevertheless be recognized as facts.

²"For human nature lies hidden under Episcopal robes, with its steadfast inclination to abuse the power intrusted to it; and the greater the power, the stronger is the temptation and the worse the abuse." (Schaff, "Church History," III., 288, 289.)

"If our ministers and people should ever decline in vital piety, . . . the posts of honor and of influence inseparable from our compact organization will change to matters of strife, unknown to the Churches whose government is less central and vigorous." (Crane, "Methodism and Its Methods," pp. 44, 45.)

and carefulness that must often fail to be realized. A great office is easy enough to create, but—who shall fill it from year to year? It calls, and oftentimes there is no elect soul to answer.

(3) It may sometimes be compelled to break up a pastorate prematurely. Take as an example the case of a city church with large evangelistic and missionary opportunities. The plans of the outgoing pastor may be disregarded or ill executed by his successor, and the church's undertakings fail through lack of continuity in able specialized leadership.

(4) Inefficient ministers, who, if dependent on a call to the pastorate of a church, would soon perhaps find themselves out of employment, and either learn to do well or cease to burden a pastoral charge, may be sustained by the itinerant system and imposed upon a long succession of suffering congregations.

(5) The frequent and inevitable changes in the pastorate have a tendency to induce restlessness and a feverish love of novelty in both minister and people. The minister may not bear so patiently with the difficulties of his present situation, nor try so faithfully to avoid unpleasant or unprofitable relations with members of his congregation, when he knows that the next session of the Annual Conference may bring him relief. The people, on their part, will be equally lacking in forbearance, and equally anticipative of a new pastoral appointment—"having itching ears."

The expectation of a perfect ecclesiastical polity would be as vain as that of a perfect language. Even the best body of forms and methods will show certain defects of their qualities. Advantage here will be offset by somewhat of disadvantage there. Nor could any universally applicable answer be returned to the question, What then is the best *available* form? But this one thing at least may be accepted as undoubtedly true—namely, that a church which should gain the wisdom to organize itself in the best possible manner would bear the marks of adaptability no less than of strength and perpetuity. Its organization would not be just the same in one land and in another, just the same to-day and to-morrow. Of change for the sake of change it would

indeed know nothing, but of change for the sake of power in a changing environment it would have an ever-recurring experience. Not undervaluing the old nor yet shrinking back in timidity from the new, it could neither be described as conservative nor as radical. It would simply be athrob with life.

VIII.

THE IDEA OF DIVINE RIGHT.

IF any one form of government be so prescribed of God as to make it universally obligatory upon the Church, then, at least according to evangelical belief, that form of government will be found set forth as obligatory in the New Testament. Is such a polity, then, to be found there? This is the question of divine right in church government.

Let us make sure that the question itself is perfectly clear. It is not whether the Church is of divine origin. It is not whether the power of government in the Church is of divine origin. It is not whether any definite form or forms of government are outlined in the New Testament. It is not whether there was originally—that is to say, in the apostolic age—any one universal form.

Nor, again, is it a question of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of any particular form of church government existing at the present time. Anything is lawful that is not, either directly or by fair implication, prohibited. It is lawful, for example, to have congregational worship on seven days or on only two days of the week, to offer prayer according to a written formulary or to pray extempore, to preach with unity of idea from a selected passage of Scripture or simply to exhort, to employ instruments of music or only the human voice in worship, to administer Christian baptism in a church edifice or in the open air, to kneel or to sit or to stand or to recline at the table of the Lord. We ask concerning these things whether they are expedient, not whether they are lawful. Similarly a mode of ecclesiastical government, not having been divinely prohibited, may be lawful, whereas, not having been divinely commanded, it is not mandatory.¹

¹Stillingfleet, "Irenicum," Part I., ch. i.

The question is, whether there be satisfactory proof that some specific form of church government, whatever it may be, was instituted by Christ himself, either immediately in his own spoken and recorded words, or mediately through the inspiration of his Spirit in the mind of the Apostles, and thereby made mandatory upon his followers throughout the world and unto the end of time.

The answer has been chiefly in the affirmative. Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, Prelacy, Papacy—for them all alike the exclusive claim of divine right, as shown in the New Testament, has been put forth. Though it cannot be added that the boldness of the assertion has always been nicely adjusted to the force of the supporting argument.

But just here is a distinction that ought to be drawn. It may be held that a certain form of government is essential to the very being of a church; in which case to assert that it exists *jure divino* is to assert that there can be no church without it. This is the prelatic and the papal position.

Or it may be held that no one form of government is essential to the very being of a church; in which case to say that some particular form is *jure divino* is to assert that, while there may be a true church, there cannot be a regularly—*i. e.*, scripturally,—organized church without it. A Christian society, therefore, which, though possessing the gospel and the sacraments, misses the scriptural organization suffers loss, but does not thereby invalidate its title to recognition as a church of Jesus Christ. This seems to be the Low-Church Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the earlier Congregational, and the Baptist position.¹

¹"Differences of view in relation to ecclesiastical polity need be no bar to mutual recognition and reciprocity. It seems to us that that should be confessed to be a true Church of Christ, in which His Spirit manifests His saving and sanctifying power, in which His truth is professed, His Word preached, and His ordinances dispensed; and it may be so confessed even by those who hold a theory of Church polity according to which its organization is imperfect and irregular." (Committee on Church Unity of the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1887.)

I. THE EXEGETIC ARGUMENT.

Now the exegetic proofs of the claim of an ecclesiastic divine right are not of the highest order. They belong to that multitudinous class of well-intentioned arguments that bring conviction chiefly to those who have it already, or who for some reason are strongly predisposed to receive it. It is mainly on other than exegetic grounds that the idea has been cherished. Often neither Scripture nor logic but some sentiment or desire has appeared as father to the thought.

First of all, perhaps, is the desire to have the path of duty and achievement clearly marked out. For would not one be thus spared the labor of painfully finding it for one's self? I once heard a prominent religious leader say: "It will be a blessed thing to get to heaven, where we shall be told what to do and shall only have to do it." No more thinking and deciding for ourselves: to the mind weary and perplexed with either speculative or practical problems, that may seem indeed the essential joy of the heavenly rest. Let some one whose authority is acknowledged and whose person is revered utter his commands, and the whole energy of loyal minds will be employed in doing them. The division of mental energy between planning, originating, judging, and then executing the plan, is what tries men's strength. It is a sweet mental narcotic that steals into the soul of him who consents to say, Our form of church government is divinely ordered, and we are not responsible except for maintaining it.

Not only is such a sentiment restful to the mind, but it also greatly exalts the organization of one's church in one's own eyes. It is in itself a powerful sentiment: This form that I love and am identified with is of divine ordering—a sacred trust from Christ himself. Not only expedient: that were a feeble idea in comparison. Not only established and existing as a fact: that is true even of the political organizations under which we live. Not only ancient, approved, agreeable to the Scriptures. But of direct divine right; attested by the seal of Christ and his Apostles; no human arrangement, but a tabernacle built according to the pattern shown in the Mount of God. Is it any wonder the

feeling awakened by such a conception should seem to be sufficient unto itself?

Besides, the exigencies of controversy have had much to do with the maintenance of this high claim. Especially since the spiritual despotism of Rome was broken, in the sixteenth century, have there been many separate ecclesiastical bodies and much controversy. Each church has contended for its own right to be. How shall it make good the contention? The short and simple method would be not to show that its constitution and economy are reasonable, or effective, or expedient, or in accordance with Scripture precedent; but to show that they are scripturally authoritative. And this is the method that has usually been followed.

Still again, the controversial position that a certain type of church organization has an exclusive divine right to be, is much stronger practically than the position that no type of church organization has such a right. I have heard baptism by immersion recommended to a company of young Christians, on the ground that, while many persons who had been baptized by sprinkling or pouring were troubled with doubts as to the validity of their baptism, nobody baptized by immersion ever had such a doubt; and that it is good common sense to choose that mode of the ordinance which everybody acknowledges as genuine. Similarly a Roman Catholic priest might say to men hesitating between the Roman Catholic and the Episcopal communion: "Even Episcopalians acknowledge ours to be a true church, but we deny with the utmost assurance that theirs is a true church: choose, therefore, that church about whose genuineness there is no doubt on either side." Or a similar bit of this reasoning (*argumentum ad timorem*) might be used by a Protestant Episcopal minister with reference to his own communion and non-episcopal communions. All such arguments, though not intellectually convincing, are adapted to practical effectiveness, because of their strong appeal to a motive of self-love—namely, the desire to be on the safe side. So the church that asserts a divine right to its organization has a practical advantage over one that denies all such assertions;

for if the former prove its claim, there may be loss or danger attendant upon membership in the latter, whereas if the latter make good its denial, even then the two simply stand together on the same plane. Who would not prefer in everything to be on the safe side?

But a not uncommon effect of controversy is to strengthen each party in adherence to his own views rather than to overthrow the opposing proposition. And it has doubtless been so a thousand times in this case. The ecclesiologists believed and loved that which they contended for, and grew stronger apace in their convictions.

2. A PRIORI CONSIDERATIONS.

Let it not be rashly supposed, however, that no argument worthy of the name has been adduced in support of the *jure divino* idea in ecclesiastical polity.

To begin with, there is an apparent presumption in its favor. Might we not expect *a priori* that the constitution, offices, and organization of the Church would be given it, at the beginning, by its Divine Founder? Shall these matters, which mean so much for the accomplishment of its mission, be left to the imperfect wisdom of successive generations of men? Moreover,

"If therefore we did seek to maintain that which most advantageth our own cause, the very best way for us and the strongest against them [ecclesiastical opponents] were to hold, even as they do, that in Scripture there must needs be found some particular form of church polity which God hath instituted, and which for that very cause belongeth to all churches, to all times. But with any such partial eye to respect ourselves, and by cunning to make those things seem the truest which are fittest to serve our purpose, is a thing which we neither like nor mean to follow" (Hooker, "Ecclesiastical Polity," Bk III., sec. 10.)

"Whether we look abroad upon the symmetry of creation at large, or at home on the smallest arrangement of His hand, we see regulation designed, both mediately and immediately, by himself. And can we believe that he would build the most favored construction of his hands with accident and confusion allowed, as men left to themselves have always built toward heaven since they were confounded on the plains of Shinar?" (McGill, "Church Government," p. 27.) But such a mode of putting the question disregards, among other things, the difference between the Divine method in the natural creation and in the sphere of moral personalities.

have we not here a prototype in the Old Testament? Was not the Church of Israel organized and governed according to a revelation from God? Was not the law that came through Moses ecclesiastical as well as moral? Let us, then, in like manner look to the New Testament for the organic form no less than the faith of the Church of Christ. Still further, if the Scriptures be taken as a divinely authorized teaching of doctrines and morals, why not also as a divinely authorized teaching of structural Christianity?

It must be acknowledged, however, that we find such presuppositions quite unable to bear the test of an impartial scrutiny. It is a very inexperienced theologian that will ascribe any great worth to *a priori* ideas as to what kind of revelation God must have given us in the Bible—what we shall and what we shall not find in this revealed Law and Testimony. Only confusion is wrought by reading into the Bible our own ideas as to what the Bible ought to be. Rather let us learn what is is. For “who hath directed the spirit of the Lord or being his counselor hath taught him?” Should we have expected, for example, that the Old Testament would lay down directions both clear and explicit concerning the use of meats, and make no clear and explicit disclosure of the future life?

Again, the presumption that a divine authorization of a fixed ecclesiastical structure in Israel will be reproduced in Christianity loses all its force when the difference between the two great eras in the Church’s history are borne in mind.¹ Israel, being but a child, had to be taught and directed as a child: Christianity is

¹“If when the limits of the Church were a solitary nation the form of her government was ordained with awful sanction by her Head, now, when she is expansive as the globe, embracing in her mission every kindred, nation, tongue, and people, must we not have a similar economy provided by the same adorable Supremacy?” (McGill, “Church Government,” p. 31.) But does not the fact of the world-wide extension of the Church make a divinely prescribed and invariable form of government less rather than more likely than in the case of a single little nation set apart, in her intellectual and religious childhood, “under guardians and stewards until the term appointed of the father?”

spiritual manhood, freedom, responsibility. The child is governed predominantly by rules; the man, by principles. So there was much in Israel which, while preparatory to Christianity, could not be prototypical of it. Take, as an example, the union of Church and State; or the elaborate and minutely prescribed system of public worship; or the "bleeding bird and bleeding beast" offered in daily sacrifice. Did these institutions forecast, unless indeed by way of antithesis, the constitution and ritual of the Church of the New Covenant? The book of Leviticus has no congener among the books of the New Testament.

As to the analogical argument drawn from the divinely revealed doctrines and morals of Scripture, its force is neutralized by the consideration that doctrines and morals being always and everywhere the same, may be delivered to men by the Spirit of truth once for all; while world-wide experience has shown that there is no one form of government, in either Church or State, that is best for all peoples, under all circumstances, and through the successive centuries and millenniums of human history.¹

Some controvertists, also, have ventured to assert that a divinely prescribed and unchangeable form is necessary to good government in the Church; that the absence of it must result in anarchic confusion and an open door to all doctrinal errors. Such

¹"God never ordained anything that could be bettered. Yet many things he hath [ordained] that have been changed, and that for the better. That which succeedeth as better now when change is requisite had been worst when that which now is changed was instituted. . . . There is no reason in the world wherefore we should esteem it as necessary always to do as always to believe the same things; seeing every man knoweth that the matter of faith is constant, the matter contrariwise of action daily changeable, especially the matter of action belonging unto Church Polity." (Hooker, "Ecc. Polity," Bk. III., sec. 10.)

"If when monarchical ideas were dominant in the state, the primitive church adopted an Episcopal form of government, it does not follow that episcopacy is the best polity in a democratic age. If, on the other hand, the little groups of believers were organized on the Congregational plan in the early days when the infant church could count but few adherents, it does not follow that that form of polity is the one best fitted to organize the universal Church*and to conduct world-wide activities." (Hyde, "Outlines of Social Theology," pp. 199, 200.)

an argument, besides being ill supported by the facts to which it makes appeal, is unwarrantably distrustful of the intellectual capacity of the Lord's people and the promised leadership of the Spirit of truth. For what is a church? Christian learners, with the pledged presence of the Master in the midst for perpetual guidance and grace.¹

But let us listen now to the exegetic arguments. *This particular form of government is authoritatively set forth in the New Testament as universal and unchangeable*: that is the proposition which is to be proved in the interest of the Congregational, or the Presbyterian, or the Prelatic, or the Papal idea of ecclesiastical polity.

The literature of the subject is abundant enough; but our review of the courses of proof must needs be extremely brief.

3. THE CONGREGATIONAL ARGUMENT.

It is maintained that in the New Testament no general church government is recognized; that each local congregation is independent of all others, and is governed by the vote of the people. The principal passages adduced in proof are the following: As to discipline, in Matthew xviii. 17 our Lord teaches that it is to be exercised by "the church," and in 1 Corinthians v. 3-5, 13, and 2 Corinthians ii. 6 we have an instance of this congregational discipline; as to election of officers, Acts i. 15-26 and vi. 2-6 show that, in the case of choosing a successor to the traitor-

¹"Equally detrimental to the soundness of saving truth, and even the liberty with which Christ has made us free, is the opposite and comparatively unhistorical extreme of anarchy in church government, claiming that no polity is given in the Bible, and that expediency is all we have by divine right for any constructure of ecclesiastical form. Observation assures us that false doctrines grow up like a thicket in all such ungoverned localities, and that churchly communism will choke even its own freedom with vapors of the worst intolerance." (McGill, "Church Government," pp. 29, 30.) But the Lutheran and the Methodist Churches, to cite no others, organized distinctly on the basis which the author here thoughtlessly describes as "anarchy in church government," seem as far as possible from "churchly communism," and have never yet, I believe, suffered a distinctly doctrinal division.

apostle and of choosing the Seven, the election was by the entire congregation; and as to legislation, in Acts xv. 4, 22, 23 we learn that the council which decided upon the regulations to be imposed upon the Gentile converts was composed, not of the representatives of a number of churches, but of the one church of the city of Jerusalem, and that this church acted not through representatives or officers of any kind but as an assembled congregation, Apostles, elders, brethren.

It is further maintained that those passages which, if they stood alone, might suggest a different mode of government (as, for instance, Acts xiv. 23, 1 Timothy v. 22, Titus i. 5), may all be understood consistently with the passages which decisively teach congregational government.

It is still further maintained that this polity, as it appears in the New Testament, is a binding precedent to be perpetually followed by all the churches of Christ throughout the world. "Such," it is held, "was the Church He organized, and such He requires his Church still to be. He may bear for a time with deviations from his plan; but he cannot approve them, he cannot give them his sanction. . . . The Church of the New Testament is our pattern tabernacle in the Mount. No deviation is allowed; not the least." It was a point on which synods and individual theologians were well agreed. The Cambridge Platform, adopted by a synod of the New England Congregational churches in 1648, explicitly pronounces that "the parts of church government are all of them exactly described in the word of God, and therefore to continue one and the same, unto the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ," and declares that therefore "it is not left in the power of men, officers, churches, or any state

¹Sawyer, "Organic Christianity," p. 92.

The divine right of Congregationalism is very pronounced in the ecclesiology teaching of Nathaniel Emmons, the first article of which as epitomized by Dr. D. M. Dexter is the following: "1. A specific form of church government was instituted by Christ in the eighteenth of Matthew—which is Congregationalism." (Dexter, "Congregationalism as Seen in Its Literature," pp. 507, 508.)

in the world, to add, diminish, or alter anything in the least measure therein."¹

Now the congregational independence of the apostolic churches may be accepted as a reasonably certain historic fact. There is good evidence of their intercongregational unification in faith and experience as a Christian fraternity; but there is no good evidence of their consolidation under a common government.

That each congregation, however, was governed simply and solely by the vote of the people has not been made clear. As to Matthew xviii. 17, the case to which our Lord's instructions here apply is not that of an ordinary church trial: it is a case of interposition on the part of the church, at the request of a wronged brother, with the aim of reconciling the offender.

In connection with the excommunication of the immoral church member by the Corinthian congregation, the directions of the apostle Paul to Timothy and Titus, which seem to give the pastor special authority in cases of discipline, might be quoted.²

From the facts that the disciples in the "upper room," awaiting Pentecost, elected Matthias (by lot) as a vice-apostle, to complete the original number of the chosen witnesses of the Resurrection, and that the whole multitude of disciples in Jerusalem elected the Seven to be set apart to a ministry, not of the word, nor of pastoral oversight, but of "tables," it does not follow that the elders who were ordained by the Apostles and others were also selected by the votes of the people.³ They may have been. What little we know of the customs of the sub-apostolic age

¹Cambridge Platform, Ch. I., 3.

²1 Tim. iii. 1-13; v. 19, 20; Titus i. 5-9; iii. 10. I should not venture to say, with some, that "the regulations about the character to be required in bishops and deacons imply that Timothy was in a position to appoint them;" but it strongly suggests that he had much to do with their appointment—say, the power of nomination or of veto.

And surely the authority not to receive an accusation against an elder, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses, and to reprove him, if found guilty, in the presence of the whole congregation, and, in the case of Titus, to admonish and after a second admonition "refuse" a factious man, mean something more than the mere chairmanship of the congregational meeting.

³Acts xiv. 23; 1 Tim. v. 22; Titus i. 5.

favours the supposition. But the inference that it must have been so is no more justifiable a conclusion than is the contrary inference, that if it were so some distinct mention would have been made of the fact.

In Acts xv. it is related that when the great question as to the conditions of the salvation of others than the Jewish people arose in Antioch a delegation was sent "to Jerusalem unto the *Apostles and elders* about this matter." Does it seem likely that the Apostles and elders would commit the decision of it to the whole membership of the church in Jerusalem, instead of accepting it as their own responsibility? Nor do we read that the decision of the matter was committed to the whole church, but only that they were present to hear the statement of it by the brethren from Antioch (v. 4), and were associated with the Apostles and elders in choosing messengers to convey the letter containing the decision to the church in Antioch (v. 22). It is possible, indeed, that the "brethren" gave a full and formal vote, and thus, constituting as they did by far the larger part of the assembly, decided the question; but it may rather be supposed that they only approved of the decision of the Apostles and elders. And this supposition is strengthened by the record in Acts xvi. 4, that as Paul and Silas went through Asia Minor they "delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained by the *Apostles and elders* that were at Jerusalem."

Again, the Congregational argument does but scant justice to the office of the Apostles—of Paul, for example, taking upon himself anxiety for all the churches, and appointing Timothy and Titus as his deputies to ordain presbyters and to set things in order in their respective fields of labor. For the apostolate may quite reasonably be regarded as indicating more than the local and temporary need of a general superintendency. It may be taken as giving sanction to some form of subsequent episcopal oversight.

The argument fails also, and more conspicuously, to do justice to the administration of government by presbyters in the New Testament churches. For it is extremely difficult to identify the

one elder, or pastor—the one-man ministry—of a modern Congregationalist or Baptist church with the board of elders that presided in at least some of the New Testament churches.¹

But even were it indubitably proved both that all the apostolic churches were independent of each other, and that they were all under strictly popular government, the conclusion would not follow that the same form of administration and no other is incumbent on every congregation in the Church of Christ of every land and age. The implied major premise (if a technical term be permitted)—namely, that *the mode of government in the New Testament Churches is obligatory upon all churches*—not being a self-evident proposition, must be proved; and no proof has yet been discovered.

It will not do simply to insist that we ought to follow New Testament precedents. For no one will say that we ought to follow them all; and so the question will arise concerning any one of them, Is this a binding precedent? Many, indeed, are the New Testament usages, real or supposed, that have been taken by Christian churches at one time and another as binding precedents. Thus have been adopted and enforced such observances or offices as the casting of lots, feet-washing, the office of teacher as distinct from that of preacher or pastor, baptism in running water, the kiss of charity, the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper, anointing the sick with oil, the plural eldership, the office of ruling elder as distinct from teaching elder. In like manner the love feast of the apostolic churches might be followed as a binding precedent; and so might still other customs of the earliest Christian age. But are all or any of these intended as authoritative examples showing what must be the practice of the Church in all places and in all ages? "When Scripture doth yield us precedents," saith Richard Hooker, "how far forth they are to be followed, this must be by reason found out."² Otherwise, fanaticism may find opportunity.

¹Ladd, "Principles of Church Polity," pp. 25-29, 215.

²"The binding nature of New Testament precedent and of apostolic appointments cannot be dismissed with a wave of the hand as if these appoint-

True, it is an unceasing Christian endeavor and joy in such a matter to imitate apostolic example. But to imitate is not to copy. It is oftener to do something different. It is to open one's mind to a truth, and one's heart to a spirit, made real through some personality. It is not to reproduce a form. Wide is the distinction between a Scripture principle and a Scripture precedent. The principle is regulative; the precedent, interpretative.

But this idea of divine right in church government, it must be added, is not characteristic of the Congregationalism of the present generation. It is a faith of the fathers that has been outgrown. The Congregational churches of to-day do not take the churches of the apostolic age as the absolutely authoritative pattern after which all their successors must be modeled, in our own age and in every other. Nor do they find in any word of the New Testament, either directly or inferentially, a prescribed form of government for the Church universal. They only profess to see in their own economy a more satisfactory embodiment of the principles of the New Testament than in any other.¹

Nor has Congregationalism refused communion with the churches outside its own order. Robert Browne, its eccentric founder, did so; but in this he has never had an appreciable fol-

ments were appropriate only in the apostolic age." (Dargan, "Ecclesiology," p. 22.) But neither can it be assumed. It calls for proof. It is not, indeed, to be "dismissed with a wave of the hand," but just as certainly it "must be by reason found out."

¹"There is no form of church government authoritatively set forth to be followed by any or by all the followers of Christ. A careful reading of the early records shows a method then followed corresponding more nearly to the congregational way than to any other." (Boynton, "The Congregational Way," p. 29.)

"We have no objection to a number of churches organizing under a bishop of their own appointment, to whom a large amount of responsibility for their general conduct shall be given. Indeed, we can see under many conditions how this may be proper and wise. Nor do we know of any reason why it is not allowable for individual churches to put authority, which they might not think it best to exercise alone, into the hands of the whole or of a group." (*Ibid.*, p. 17. See, to the same effect, Ladd, "Principles of Church Polity," pp. 9, 10.)

lowing. Pastor John Robinson and his congregation at Leyden, for example, though Brownists rather than Barrowists, stood for fellowship with other Christian churches. So with Congregationalists generally from that day till now. To deny the validity of either the ministry or the sacraments of their sister churches would be alien to both their creed and their spirit. They are catholic, not sectarian. In fact, they are conspicuously in sympathy with the forces of American Christianity that are making for coöperation and unity.¹

4. THE PRESBYTERIAN ARGUMENT.

It is probable that many Presbyterians would not claim more for their polity than that it is most excellent and entirely agreeable to the Scriptures.² But the *jure divino* theory of ecclesias-

¹"Thus recognizing the unity of the Church of Christ in all the world and knowing that we are but one branch of Christ's people, while adhering to our own peculiar faith and order, we extend to all believers the hand of Christian fellowship upon the basis of those great fundamental truths in which all Christians should agree." (Declaration of Faith of the National Council of Congregational Churches, June 14-24, 1865.)

²"It is affirmed by some that this form of Church government is authoritatively and exclusively enjoined in the Scriptures; that it is therefore of universal obligation, and that no other is of Divine right. They claim to be '*jure divino* Presbyterians.' The great body of Presbyterians, however, are content to claim simply that their views are clearly sanctioned by Scripture." (Dr. E. F. Hatfield, in Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Art. "Presbyterianism.")

Take, for example, three eminent Presbyterian authorities of Scotland and America:

"As to ecclesiastical administration, the New Testament supplies us neither with a definite form of polity nor with a directory of worship; and it is only when we perceive that it was not its purpose to do so that we rise to the idea of the unity and spirituality of the Church as the Apostles conceived it." (Forrest, "The Christ of History and of Experience," p. 286.)

"Such was the contribution of Jesus toward the shaping of the future character of his Church. He provided for it no ecclesiastical constitution, issued no authoritative instructions concerning forms of church government, clerical offices and orders, or even worship." (Bruce, "The Kingdom of God," p. 270.)

"As there is no definite form of church government prescribed in the precepts of Christ, neither is there any enacted in the example of the Apostles.

tical organization is the theory of Presbyterianism as such. It is true that in the Form of Government adopted by the Westminster Assembly no higher claim is made for presbyterial order than that it "is lawful and agreeable to the word of God." But this is not because it was entitled to no higher claim in the minds of probably a large majority of the Assembly. It is because the Assembly was legislating in an irenic spirit—trying to avoid all possible offense to Episcopacy and Independency. It is certain that the divine right of Presbytery was strongly maintained in that day. "I dare assure myself," said John Milton in the earlier part of his controversial career, "that every true Protestant, . . . even for the reason of it so coherent with the doctrine of the gospel, beside the evidence of command in Scripture, will confess it to be the only true church government."¹ And such a confession has been made, though not by "every true Protestant," both personally and officially, unto the present time.²

. . . No man can deduce any of the existing forms of church government in their detailed arrangements, or even in their distinctive features, from the facts recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, nor from the precepts given in the Epistles; and the wisest expositors have given up the hopeless attempt." (Van Dyke, "The Church: Her Ministry and Sacraments," p. 52.)

¹Cf. Morris, "Theology of the Westminster Symbols," p. 636; Fairbairn, "Studies in Religion and Theology," p. 153.

A line of presbyterial ordinations from the Apostles was also asserted and emphasized. The Provincial Assembly of London in 1654 declared, for example: "Our ministry is derived to us from Christ and his Apostles by succession of a ministry continued in the Church for 1,600 years. We have (1) a lineal succession from Christ and his Apostles." (Briggs, "American Presbyterianism," pp. 3, 68-71.)

²"That our blessed Saviour . . . hath appointed officers not only to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, but also to exercise discipline. . . . The ordinary and perpetual officers in the Church are Bishops or Pastors; the representatives of the people, usually styled Ruling Elders; and Deacons." (Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, chaps. I. iii. and III. ii.)

"Christ, as King, has given to his Church officers, oracles, and ordinances; and especially has he ordained therein his system of doctrine, government, discipline, and worship; all which are either expressly set down in Scripture or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced therefrom; and to which things he commands that nothing be added, and that from them naught

In the application, however, of the three laws—the parity of the ministry, the right of the people to a part in church government, and the governmental unity of the Church—that are believed to be authoritatively laid down in the New Testament, there is considerable divergence of view. Some would regard them as a more exclusive system than do others. That is to say, some would act on the principle that nothing may be done but what is either directly or by fair inference commanded; others, that anything may be done but what is either directly or by fair inference forbidden. Dr. John H. Thornwell, for example, opposed, with all the force of his keen logic and fervent eloquence, the organization of missionary boards, on the ground that they were not provided for in Scripture; while Dr. Charles Hodge approved them as expedient institutions on the ground that they were not forbidden by any of the three New Testament laws of church organization.¹ This broader view is the more prevalent.

Presbyterianism has much to say that is strong and Scriptural on behalf of its polity. It finds government by elders in ancient Israel, in the Jewish synagogue, and in the apostolic churches. It finds the Apostles themselves to have been elders;² and hence to “inquire of the Apostles and elders” about the proper rules for Gentile converts³—was it not to inquire of a presbytery? On the very first great missionary tour Paul and Barnabas “ordained elders in every church,”⁴ and later Paul left Titus in Crete that he might “ordain elders in every city.”⁵ In Hebrews

be taken away.” (Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, Par. 10.)

“Such order and ordinances as the very nature of the Church called for, and because such as the nature of the Church called for, were ordained from the first as to their substance, and as to their form modified during the progressive steps of the revelation, under the direct administration of the King in Zion, and through men immediately inspired, until their forms were fixed and left to be permanent at the close of the revelation.” (Stuart Robinson, “The Church of God,” pp. 121, 122.)

¹Thornwell’s Collected Writings, Vol. IV., pp. 217-241, and Appendix, B. See pp. 403, 404.

²1 Pet. v. 1; 2 John 1.

³Acts xiv.

⁴Acts xiv. 23.

⁵Titus i. 5.

we read, "Remember them that have the rule over you,"¹ and in Timothy, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of all honor;"² wherefrom it would appear that the presbytery were the rulers.

Concerning this theory it must be said, on the other hand, that, like that of Congregationalism, it sees no governmental significance in the apostolate. Also, the passage, "Especially those who labor in the word and in teaching,"³ upon which it rests the constitutional distinction between ruling elders and teaching elders, as two distinct and permanent classes of church officers, is unable to bear the weight of so large an inference. Still again, Paul's epistles to the Corinthians seem to show that, in their church, discipline was administered not by elders—of whom he makes no mention at all—but by the congregation as a whole. It is impossible here to find any semblance of government by a presbytery.

Difficult also is it to find in the New Testament the form in which Presbyterianism embodies the truth of the unity of the Church—namely, a series of courts by which a part of the Church is brought under the jurisdiction of a larger part, and all parts under the jurisdiction of the whole. The most that has been said for it exegetically is that the church in Jerusalem, and in other cities, such as Antioch and Corinth, is spoken of in the singular number, and yet, being so large, it must have consisted of several congregations:⁴ that the meeting in Jerusalem to consider the question of Gentile church membership, has some appearance of a council of elders from more than one congregation;⁵ that Paul speaks of the Church as one body "fitly framed and knit together, through that which every joint supplieth,"

¹Ch. xiii. 7. Cf. 1 Thess. v. 12; Rom. xii. 8. ²1 Tim. v. 17.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Acts viii. 1; iv. 4; vi. 1.

⁵"We are bound to connect in a common representation the churches of a populous community, in town or country, to be called *Church* in the singular number, as they called the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch, respectively, and also to summon general assemblies for the care of such collective ecclesia, as they did at a council at Jerusalem, to decide on the reference from Antioch." (McGill, "Church Government," pp. 44, 45.)

and that its bands and joints may not impossibly be supposed to be a series of church courts; and that the practice of the Apostles shows that in their conception the Church is one.

The conclusion in which most minds that are under no pressure to maintain a thesis on the subject would probably agree, is that the government of the apostolic churches by presbyters only, and their confederation under a general presbyterial government, may be accepted as a doubtful hypothesis, but is by no means made good, by the proofs adduced, as a historic certainty.

And still we must ask as before: Supposing the presbyterial system and no other were proved as obtaining in ancient Israel and under apostolic guidance in the first Christian churches, does that alone make it mandatory forever? Would it be schism and sectarianism for a Christian congregation, one hundred or two thousand years afterwards, and under widely different conditions, to organize itself, for what seemed to be conclusive reasons, under some other form? Would it even be "irregular?"

Presbyterianism might answer such a question affirmatively. Nevertheless, even in its straitest school, it would not unchurch its sister churches. Because it holds that wherever the Spirit of Christ abides and the truth of the gospel is practiced, there is a true church of Christ, however irregular and imperfect in outward form. Its confession is that the Scripture type of organization is necessary not to the being but only to the perfection of a church.¹

¹"To refuse to recognize as a Church of Christ any body of associated believers united for the purposes of worship and discipline, can be justified only on the ground that some particular form of organization has by Divine authority been made essential to the existence of the Church. And if essential to the existence of the Church, it must be essential to the existence of piety and to the presence and operations of the Holy Spirit. *Ubi Spiritus Sanctus ibi Ecclesia* is a principle founded upon the Scriptures and held sacred by evangelical Christians in all ages." (Hodge, "Church Polity," p. 97.)

"Our Episcopal brethren honestly differ from us in their views as to the divinely ordained constitution of the Church and of the ministry. We think that they have departed from the Apostolic and primitive model; they think that we have done so. But the substance ought not to be confounded

5. THE PRELATIC ARGUMENT.

Prelacy is not mighty in the Scriptures. Its strength lies elsewhere. The Congregationalist and the Presbyterian bring their systems at once and solely to the judgment of the written Word, as the tribunal before which they must stand or fall. But this one and sufficient test does not clearly appear in the procedure of the prelatist. He is much occupied with the constitutional history of the post-apostolic and the medieval Church. He finds prelacy, as a matter of historic fact, largely in possession of the field from the third century onward; and there is great power and advantage in *possession*—with many minds it is nine-tenths of the argument. He finds a succession of bishops ruling and reigning through hundreds of years. These bishops assert that the Church is continuous in a tactual line of authoritative overseers, each an ecclesiastic lord, from Christ through the Apostles unto the present day; and the prelatist allows the claim. Apostolic succession appears as a formative principle in church history; and he accepts the principle. Then, through searching the Scriptures, he finds what he can to confirm the imposing historic claim—and seems here content, unhappily, with listening to the echo of his own ideas.

This attitude of the prelatist mind is strikingly exemplified in Canon (now Bishop) Gore's apology for the principle of apostolic succession—"The Church and the Ministry." The author, after preliminary explanations (chs. I., II.), presents immediately "The Witness of Church History" (ch. III.)—"to exhibit the extent to which in church history the principle of the apostolic succession has been postulated and acted upon since the time when the continuous record begins."¹ Then he brings forward the Scripture argument (ch. IV.). This order, "which treats the question, What has the Church in fact believed about her ministry? as preliminary to the investigation of her title-deeds,"

with the form. A church may have unfailing marks of being a true church, though it may be imperfectly organized." (Committee on Church Unity of the Presbyterian Church in 1887.)

¹P. xv.

has been chosen, he explicitly declares, because "it was hardly possible for the present writer to treat the question in any other order," and this because "a book had better represent that process of 'labor' by which its writer's opinions have been formed."¹

Especially are this class of theologians inclined to ascribe a determinative value to the faith and the forms of early Christianity. Thus the Anglo-Catholic may be found ending his quest practically in the Ante-Nicene Church. There he finds the authoritative model, uncorrupted as yet by the usurpations of Rome, in both doctrine and polity, for the subsequent ages. There, rather than in the New Testament itself, appears to him the embodiment of the mind of the Master as to the organic form of Christianity.²

But we are concerned only about the Scripture argument for the divine right of prelacy; and this having already been given under the title of "The Apostolic Succession,"³ need not here be repeated.

And if surprise be felt that so inconclusive an argument as that for the divine right of prelacy should by a considerable class of cultured minds be regarded as sufficient, let it be remembered that to these same minds the New Testament argument for sacerdotalism seems equally satisfactory. For example: "We accept the Real Presence," says Canon Gore in "Roman Catholic Claims," "because (a) it was taught by the Fathers of East and West from the first; (b) it is confirmed by the natural meaning of our Lord's words and the language of St. Paul in his epistles."⁴ One who can so read the Gospels and Epistles as to be confirmed in his belief that the Apostles were priests, need expect no difficulty in finding from the same sources confirmation

¹P. xvi.

²"Here, then, the Church of England takes her position, doing her best to stand upon the old ways, holding to the ancient principles of the Church, but refusing to identify medieval dogmas with primitive beliefs, and also refusing, under the pretext [*principle*] of loyalty to the Scriptures, to disregard the early customs and traditions of the apostolic Church." (William Clark, M.A. (Oxon.), "The Anglican Reformation," p. 459.)

³Part II., chs. XI., XII.

⁴P. 91.

of the belief that they were prelates and transmitters of prelacy to all subsequent ages.

It is pertinent, though painful, to note also that the breadth of practical application which the prelatist claims for his conclusions is inversely proportioned to the strength of argument by which they are supported. He would exclude all Christians who are not organized under the prelatic polity from membership in the Church of Christ.

6. THE PAPAL ARGUMENT.

With the Roman Catholic the Church is first. It stands evermore as the one teacher of truth. The Scriptures indeed are infallible; but they are given as a depositum to the Church, which, speaking supremely through the pope, is their only infallible interpreter. Should the papist, therefore, wish to satisfy his mind concerning the divine right of the bishop of Rome to govern all Christians, he will not inquire of the Scriptures. He will ask the bishop of Rome himself, and rest silent, if not content, with the answer.

This answer, however, will not avail for other inquirers. Should they be Protestants, Scriptural proof must be offered. "But have we any positive proof," asks Cardinal Gibbons, "that Christ did appoint a supreme ruler over his Church? To those, indeed, who read the Scriptures with the single eye of a pure intention, the most abundant evidence of this fact is furnished."¹

This evidence is the primacy of Peter. Christ declared that upon Peter, as a rock, he would build his Church, and to him would he give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.² And this investiture of power is supposed to be confirmed by the words, "Do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren,"³ and by the charge, "Feed my sheep."⁴ Also, in the lists of the Apostles as given in the Gospels, the name of Peter stands first. Then, too, when he had spoken in the council in Jerusalem, every one kept silence.⁵

¹"The Faith of Our Fathers," p. 117.

²Luke xxii. 32.

⁴John xxi. 17.

³Matt. xvi. 13-19.

⁵Acts xv. 12.

One feels at a loss to determine what is the "pure intention" that can find here that "most abundant evidence" of which the Cardinal speaks—unless indeed it be the intention to accept with unquestioning trust whatever the Roman Church may offer in support of her claims. The power of the keys was not only promised by Christ to Peter, but was also given both to him and to the other Apostles,¹ and to the Christian congregation.² The Church is built "upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."³ Peter was simply first in activity, outspokenness, and honor among the original Twelve; it was he that first preached the gospel of Jesus and the Resurrection at Pentecost and to the Gentiles,⁴ claiming for himself only to be a "fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ"⁵—and that was his primacy. James, not Peter, was presiding officer of the church in Jerusalem, and apparently president of the council held there. The silence in the council was for the purpose of hearkening to Barnabas and Saul—and even were it due to the words that Peter had just spoken, it would prove nothing to the point.⁶ The apostle Paul, from the beginning of his missionary career, was the chief leader and caretaker of the churches; and he acknowledged dependence for his apostleship solely upon Christ, not upon Peter or any of the Apostles who were before him. It came to him "not from men, neither through man [or, *a man*]."⁷

Imagine the Apostle of the Gentiles recognizing a constitutional authority to control the course of his ministry in Simon Peter, and holding himself in readiness to obey his commands. True, he was formally set apart, together with Barnabas, to a great missionary undertaking whereunto the Spirit of God had called him. Not, however, by Simon Peter, nor by any Apostle; but with the laying on of the hands, after fasting and prayer, of prophets and teachers, his brethren, in the Christian congregation of Antioch—whence and not from Jerusalem he went forth.⁸

¹John xx. 22, 23.²Eph. ii. 20.³1 Pet. v. 1.⁴Gal. i. 1.⁵Matt. xviii 15-20.⁶Acts x.⁷Acts xv. 12.⁸Acts xiii. 1-3.

But even supposing, in the face of the whole spirit and teaching of the New Testament, that Peter's primacy was that of "a supreme ruler over Christ's Church," the contention that this rulership has been transmitted to the bishops of Rome, making them, each in succession, the absolute ruler, final judge, and infallible teacher of all churches and all Christians, is simply "the annihilating polemics of assertion."

Prelacy and papacy are alike in the exclusiveness of their claim. Obedience to some bishop, in the one case, as obedience to the bishop of Rome, in the other, is accounted necessary to membership in the Church of God. But as to the bishop of Rome, those who reject his supremacy are officially anathematized.

7. CONCLUSIONS.

Now among Christians who believe that no particular form of outward organization is essential to the existence of the Church of Christ, the differences of ecclesiastic structure are not of serious import. But when it is put forward as an article of faith, that one designated governmental form of Christianity is necessary to the Church's very existence, covenanted grace flowing into human hearts through that channel only, a radically different conception of the religion of Jesus is involved. So the inquiry now concerns an essential element of the Christian religion.¹

If Jesus Christ did organize his Church in a tactual succession of bishops, with or without a personal autocratic head, inside of which are all the blessings of his covenant and outside of which are none, then those who deny this apostolic succession are chargeable with rebellion against the Divine order and with schism in the body of Christ. On the other hand, if Jesus Christ did not so organize his Church, then those who affirm such an apostolic succession are chargeable with these same offenses.

¹"In a word, this book claims on behalf of the apostolic succession that it must be reckoned with as a permanent and essential element of Christianity." (Gore, "The Church and the Ministry," p. xiv.)

Moreover, the burden of proof rests upon those who affirm. The advocates of the sacerdotal episcopal succession must prove their case. Until then the demand that it shall be accepted by others—save by the unthinking or the will-less—is worse than idle. In the civil courts no man may be condemned so long as there remains a reasonable doubt of his innocence. What has been the amount and character of the evidence on which, in the ecclesiastical court, multiplied millions of evangelic Christians have been condemned as having no part nor lot in the covenanted blessings of the Church of Christ?

It is a true and most sacred idea, that of divine right. Not permission only but duty as well are included in it. Nor is there any sphere of life and activity from which it can be shut out. Whatever, being not unlawful, is expedient, may and *must* be done. Either an individual or a society may not only claim the right to do it, but must do it because it is right.

Within these limits of lawfulness and expediency, therefore, all church organization is alike *jure divino*. For such organization is something that *may be* and that *ought to be*.

But neither is this all. The supreme constructive force in the kingdom of God is not that of rights, nor is it that of the right. The Divine Builder of the Church, let it never be forgotten, found the symbol of his power and wisdom in the cross. And only as sharers in his mind can workers together with him plan and build with true success. The heart of love molds and colors the outward order. Think of an ecclesiastic economy taking form from the question, Which of us shall be greatest? as compared with one that should be directed by the motive: "For all things are for your sakes, that the grace, being multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God." Christianity as organized is to be for service, sacrificial and unceasing. Hence its highest formative force: "*love buildeth up.*"

CONCLUSION.

THE PROPHET IN ADMINISTRATION.

OUR excursion into the field of ecclesiology is here about at an end. Its results hardly call for a formal summing up. But it seems not unfitting, now at the last, to dwell for a little while, in connection with a word of résumé, upon a certain personal qualification in whoever would conduct successfully the business of organized Christianity.

I. FORMATIVE IDEAS IN CHURCH ORGANIZATION.

The sources of human power, let us not refuse to be again reminded, are in that which is invisible. They are not to be found in muscle or nerve, but in ideas, affections, aspirations, choices, plans, purposes. We could live on without the visible world, and before long shall do so. Whatever works, therefore, men may produce on earth are wrought out indeed through the body, but from and by the unseen conscious self. This is equally true, whether the product be a mechanism or an institution—equally true of the houses we build and of the social organizations, political, religious, or other, which may hold meetings in them. Whatever else any such things may be, they are visualized ideas. Take the ideas out of a watch or a pocketknife, and there is nothing left. You have robbed timepiece and knife of that without which neither of them would or could have come into existence. Take the ideas out of the organized government of the American commonwealth, and there is nothing left to concern yourself about. You have taken away that without which no organized government would or could ever have come into existence. So, in order to appreciate any mechanical product or any institution, it must needs be looked at both from without and from within—from without to see what it is, from within to see what it means.

Now we have been led to recognize in certain ideas—such as

fellowship in Christ, social dependence, individualism, divine vocation, representation, service, authority and obedience, unity, autonomy, evangelism—the true determining forces in church organization.

It follows that for the administration of government in the Church there is demanded not only administrative skill but at the same time a distinctly higher personal quality—namely, *spiritual insight*. For the heart of truth in the ideas must be known by him who would give it the most effective practical form of expression.

In the Church of the Old Covenant these two functions may be described as prophecy and kingship. On the throne of Israel sat, indeed, the king, but beside him stood the prophet. Was it by a Divine ordinance that the king reigned? It was likewise a Divine word that the prophet spoke.¹ Thus the living voice of the men of spiritual insight was no less truly a part of the theocratic polity of the Hebrew Church-State than were the commands of the monarch or the Book of the Covenant which the inspired lawgiver read, beneath the shadow of Sinai, in the hearing of the people.²

In the Church of the New Covenant, essentially the same two functions, though of course under other than the ancient forms, make their appearance. "Whether prophecy, let us *prophesy*;" "he that *ruleth*, with diligence."³ "Do the work of an *evangelist*;" "that thou shouldest *set in order* the things that are wanting, and *appoint elders* in every city."⁴ On the one hand, the mystery of redeeming love and the spiritual morality of the gospel were to be unfolded; on the other, the temporal and governmental affairs of the churches were to be administered. In brief, there was a prophetic ministry—Apostles, prophets, teachers; and there was also a ministry of government—presbyter-bishops and deacons.

¹2 Sam. vii. 1-17; 1 Kings xviii. 16-21; 2 Kings ix. 1-7; Isa. xxxvii. 21-35; xxxix. 1-8.

²Ex. xxiv. 7.

³Rom. xii. 6, 8.

⁴2 Tim. iv. 5; Titus i. 5.

In the course of the second century the prophetic ministry, as we have further seen, declined under the encroachments of the ministry of government. Already in the first quarter of the century, Ignatius, though claiming as for himself to speak immediately from God—"I got no intelligence from any man, but the Spirit proclaimed these words, Do nothing without the bishop"¹—has not a syllable of indorsement for the prophets of his day. On the contrary, he makes the Christian's duty consist in unquestioning obedience to the office-bearers of the Church. At the close of the century we find Irenæus urging obedience not to the prophet but to the presbyter in his office of both superintendency and teaching. "It is incumbent," he insists, "to obey the presbyters who are in the Church," "those who together with the episcopate have received a sure gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father." For without the peace of unity and order, how could there be hope of any large achievement? And the chief office-bearer, the bishop, with his board of assistants, the presbyters, was the bond of this peace. They had the sufficient "gift of truth." The man who came professing to convey a message direct from God might prove a disturbing element in the community. Let him be restrained or put to silence for the good of the Cause. Such was the ecclesiastic argument and decision.

2. PROTEST AGAINST THE SUPPRESSION OF PROPHECY.

It was only after a vigorous and prolonged protest, however, that prophetism yielded its position. And its defeat was due not wholly to episcopal domination, but in large measure to its own inherent weaknesses. For the prophet, like the bishop, was imperfect in spiritual character; and the heavenly light of truth that was in him proved sometimes to be darkness. He might be the subject of more or less serious errors, vagaries, excesses.

This was conspicuously illustrated in Montanism, the organ-

¹To the Philadelphians, 7.

ized form which the prophetic break with ecclesiasticism took in the second and third centuries. The Montanists, rejecting none of the generally received doctrines of Christianity, stood, on the contrary, as outspoken witnesses for two great New Testament principles: for the perpetual guidance of Christ's people by the Spirit as given to them all without reference to official position, and for a godly church discipline. From these principles the institutional Christianity of the age was turning away more and more; and this downgrade movement the prophetic spirit strenuously resisted. But the teachings of Montanism, in which that spirit had chiefly found expression, were so severe toward the penitent backslider and so corrupted with superstitious beliefs (if we may believe the accounts that have come down to us from its opponents) as to fail of their proper effect. Montanus himself was a fanatic, professing to be the very Spirit of truth whom our Lord had promised, and to have come to usher in the last age of the Church.

Possibly the voice of more enlightened witnesses might have been heeded, and Christendom saved from much externalism and priestly domination—none can tell. But Montanism failed. It was stigmatized as a heresy and a sect—

that un pitying Phrygian sect which cried:
"Him can no fount of fresh forgiveness lave,
Who sins, once washed by the baptismal wave."

And after persisting through four hundred years, it was persecuted out of existence by the Imperial government in alliance with the "Great," or Catholic, Church.

But the loss resulting from the suppression of the two evangelic principles for which this notable protest stood was irreparable. For ecclesiasticism had all things now in its own hands, and the result in due course of time was Romanism with the stereotyped dogmas of its teaching and ruling hierarchy. The prophet was slighted or forbidden, as an intruder: the priest claimed for himself every needed illumination and the absolute right to rule. Administration had become all; authority, the substitute for truth; the rulers, the Church.

3. THE CHRISTIAN PROPHET'S GIFT AND MESSAGES.

The Christian prophet may or may not be a man of conspicuous intellectual ability. He may or may not be an eloquent orator. He may either write or speak. The essential thing is that he shall live "as seeing Him who is invisible," in personal communion with the Highest; and that he shall have the inner constraint and vocation to make known to others, so far as he himself may have received it, the mind of the Spirit. Let it not be supposed that he must needs have some new truth to tell. Even the Prophet of prophets came chiefly to *fulfill*. But that which has been declared from the beginning will always find in the prophet-preacher a new utterance and an instant application to existing conditions and needs.

Brooding above every soul, like the visible sky overhead, are the heavens of eternal Truth and Righteousness. In any land, on any sea, wherever a human soul lives and moves, the light is ever falling from on high upon that soul. Otherwise moral life in its universal range would be impossible on earth. But what others may refuse to see or may see less clearly in this light of God, or may feel less keenly, or may hold as a creed of the intellect rather than a personal experience and law of daily life, becomes on the prophet's fire-touched lips a present and tremendous reality.

What is the almighty Power by which the worlds were made? God is Spirit, answers the prophet, and is seeking men to worship him in spirit and in truth. What is man, spirit or flesh? Man is essentially spiritual, in his innermost nature akin to the Creator, proclaims the prophet, and therefore to be governed in the whole of life by the law of the spirit and not by the impulses of the flesh. That in all ages is the word of the prophetic witness. That is to him the eternal Real of which his idealism, as men may call it, is the true though imperfect image.

He will be a preacher of righteousness. Falsehood, dishonesty, unrighteous means for the gaining of even righteous ends, whether practiced by the individual or by the community, will

not interpret itself to him in terms of bright-witted expediency or pardonable weakness, but as sin against God. The conventional morality of the world will acquire no sanctity in his eyes because of its intrusion into the Church. Rather will it receive the heavier condemnation. He will weave no mesh of casuistry to blind his eyes withal. He will expose, not indeed without compassion and a painful sense of his own imperfections, the moral illusions and compromises of the heart. "And the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies." Nor may he call any man master on earth, or submit the testimony of the conscience or the heart that beats with a pulse of fire within his own breast to any lower authority than that of the one Master who is in heaven.

But if the prophet's vision be not too restricted, he will have another and a greater message to deliver. Concerning the love of God and his good pleasure which from eternity has been purposed in Christ, there will be given him some living and interpretative word. Such a message will come as a voice of salvation to the guilty conscience, will kindle a glory among the common things of life, will make all righteous conduct an inspiration and a joy. For "of that light" of life also the prophet of this age of Christ and the Spirit is "sent to bear witness."

Which is the greater function, spiritual insight or ecclesiastical government, prophecy or administration? It is as if one should be asked to decide upon the relative merits of thought and the alphabet. It is a question of truth and form. It is to make comparison between Christianity and its organization. To despise either would be madness; yet it by no means follows that the two should be classed together. "God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers:" *after these* are "helps," "governments."¹ "It is not fit," said the Eleven, "that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables."² It is upon "the foundation of the apostles and prophets"—not of the deacons and presbyter-bishops—that the new

¹ I Cor. xii. 28.

² Acts vi. 2.

Israel is built up as a holy temple in the Lord.¹ Mary of Bethany, illumined by the spirit of self-forgetting love for Christ, was unconsciously a prophet—"she hath anointed My body beforehand for the burying:" Judas, treasurer of the Twelve, was an administrator.

Or, going back to the great primal word of all, we have the Lord's own explicit promise that upon the spiritually illumined soul, the confessing disciple, the witness-bearing prophet, as a foundation stone, he will build his ecclesia. Economic management is indeed an important means toward the achievement of the Church's end; but to know and witness the revelation of the Father in Jesus Christ is *to be the Church itself*.²

4. FAULTS OF THE PROPHET.

To-day, as heretofore, the Christian prophet can lay claim to no immunity from manifest human limitations and infirmities, or from besetting sins. His *vision of truth at many points may be clouded*. His *lips may be closed in culpable silence* for fear of offending some seat of authority or of losing the good will of friends.

Or, what is here of more immediate significance, he may *fail to appreciate the difficulties of administration*. Thus he will grow impatient at the office-bearer's slowness to give the whole truth the sanction of insistent positive authority within his jurisdiction. For example, there may be an article in the accepted creed that does not fairly represent the most enlightened present judgment of the Church—a part of the doctrinal inheritance, let us suppose, from a certain great but not inerrant teacher, a Martin Luther, a John Calvin, or some other. "Substitute it at once," cries the impatient prophet, "with a better." But administrative wisdom will consider the whole effect which such a credal change would produce upon the minds of believers, and the best time and means for its accomplishment; and so may not be ready for immediate action. Or, there may be some

¹Eph. ii. 20, 21.

²Matt. xvi. 17, 18.

feature of the Church's economy that has apparently outlived its day of usefulness; admirably adapted perhaps to the circumstances in which it originated, it does not so well suit present conditions; therefore—"lay it promptly aside." But those on whom rests chiefly the responsibility of its abolition may ponder, Where then is the reasonable assurance of securing a better in its place? Or, to take still another instance, there are moral practices that are inconsistent with the counsels of perfection; the most enlightened consciences cannot follow them without grieving the Spirit of God; therefore—"let them be forbidden, and the Church purified from all evil-doers." Yet the elders of the Church, in their watch-care over souls in all stages of spiritual development, from the babes in Christ who in a sense are "yet carnal and walk as men" to the maturest saint with his clear-sighted moral judgment and faithful will, may see that some things should be temporarily permitted, though not approved—"because of the hardness of your hearts." Does the Apostle, who is both prophet and administrator, bid the brethren in Corinth exclude from church fellowship those who are "yet carnal and walk as men?" No; it would be like casting faulty little children out of the household. Does he also bid them retain in membership the incestuous man, as they seem disposed to do? On the contrary, he bids them put him out—to be readmitted only on repentance.

Assuredly it behooves Christ's office-bearers to stand, as he stood, inflexible against all unrighteousness, and to do their official duty at whatever cost. But is it not also their duty to discriminate both between the lawful and the unlawful and between the lawful and the inexpedient, and without a moment's compromise of conscience so to administer the discipline and direct the appliances of the Church as to secure the greatest good of all? Their question will ever be: How may I best use "the authority which the Lord gave for building up, and not for casting down?" And the answer will not always be disclosed through a single flash of insight. Indeed, the idealistic solution of such practical questions will sometimes be liable to suspicion

because of its very quickness and simplicity. There is too little difficulty for the requirements of the task—"How is it that thou hast found it so soon, my son?"

5. FAULTS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR.

Equally grave are the faults of the administrator in the house of God.

It is possible for him practically *to rest in the Church as an end in itself*, instead of conducting it as a means for realizing the Christianity which it represents. He finds it already established, an old and respectable institution. It provides for the religious nature of its membership, offers many social opportunities, brings congenial people together, serves as a mutual beneficiary association, places its ministers in an influential position and yields them a steady, if not an affluent, support. Therefore, let it be kept up under a prudent and conservative administration, regularly resisting every troubler of its peace. It was in the spirit of their ancestral order, and not in that of the coming kingdom of God, that the priests in Jerusalem took their prominent part in sending the Prophet of prophets to crucifixion.

As the mere politician has forgotten, if he ever knew, that his party has no right or reason to exist except for the sake of the government, so the mere ecclesiastic seems oblivious of the fact that the Church is only for the sake of the kingdom of God. The existing order, he thinks, must be maintained. All new aspects and accents of truth are regarded as presumably false; all new modes of publishing the Gospel, sensational; all new economic measures, superficial and impolitic. Should a John Wyclif, believing that "the sacred Scriptures are the property of the people, and one which no one should wrest from them," translate these Scriptures into English for all Englishmen, let people be instructed that "it is a dangerous thing, as witnesseth blessed St. Jerome, to translate the text of Scripture out of one tongue into another." Should an astronomer read the sky or a geologist the rocks or a biologist the forms of terrestrial life differently from the traditional reading of the Old Testament

Scriptures, let him be silenced or at least denounced without the honor of a respectful hearing. Should a Wesley preach to the ignorant multitude that they may know the forgiveness of sins by a divine witness within, he is at best a benevolent stirrer up of fanaticism throughout the land, and must be told by Bishop Joseph Butler that "belief in the immediate guidance of God's Spirit is a horrid thing, a very horrid thing." Should laymen, like Robert Raikes, without ordination or theological training, be moved to go forth and gather the neglected poor children into Sunday schools, it is an unwarrantable innovation which the archbishop of Canterbury must call a council to consider and oppose. Should a preacher of righteousness arise to waken the conscience of the Christian congregation by exposing the mammon worship not of the eighth century before the coming of Christ but of the twentieth century after; should he declare the just judgments of God concerning manufacturers and tradesmen who for money's sake keep blighting the young manhood of the land; should the "burden" of the oppressed who are not receiving their rightful inheritance in sunlight and air and the products of their labor in the world which God "has given to the children of men," rest very heavy upon his spirit—he is bidden to be discreet and "go slow." Which indeed might be accepted as fairly good advice if it did not mean, being interpreted, "Be unfaithful, and do nothing at all." Let the impracticable prophets and teachers be stoned with stones: no future generation, it is thought, will ever take up these stones to build them into a monument.

Meanwhile perhaps the churches, under their respectable official leadership, do not go forward. All around them are large numbers of thoughtful, intelligent people and of thoughtless, unintelligent people, of self-respecting poor people and of the abject and enfeebled, whom they fail to interest or even to touch with a strong brother's hand. Shall there be no well-planned, patient, and enthusiastic effort to reach the increasing multitude of the unchurched? Are the methods of the past necessarily the best methods for present conditions? Shall it be assumed that

inside the churches, as now constituted, are included substantially all persons who are susceptible of moral improvement or willing to be saved? Where is the yearning heart of love for the lost?

It is quite possible for the churches of a community to show no sense of obligation to grapple with the problem of poverty. Or their voices may be mute and their hands idle in the presence of notoriously prevalent forms of injustice. It is not an unheard-of state of things for them even to look with indifference upon the cause of the most imperative moral reform. They might make it successful. By vital united action they could bring to bear an effectual influence for the protection of the young from organized forms of vice, for the help of the poor and the incompetent, for temperance, for clean and wholesome living. If they seem but half-hearted about such things, is it that they have no mission from God concerning them? or is it not because the congregation of Jesus the Son of Man is somehow regarded, whether consciously or not, as an end in itself rather than a means for making visible and dominant the inner kingdom of righteousness?

Administration may also be *too easily satisfied with external success*. The eyes of the prophet are continually fixed on the invisible. To him it is

Better to walk the world unseen
Than watch the hour's event.

With spiritual values only is he concerned—with things as they ought to be rather than as they are. But the very office of the administrator inclines him to overestimate things as they are—things that can be seen and counted. It is bitter to fail or to have people say that we have failed; and what is more assuring than to register a sort of success that may be known and applauded of all men? The Church is to increase, not decrease nor simply hold its own. The annual report must mark advancement. Hence numbers are emphasized rather than quality; ingathering, rather than edification; the raising of money and the erec-

tion of church edifices, rather than growth in holiness. The divine order is reversed. Not professedly nor with full intention, but nevertheless really the administrator becomes unwisely attentive to external prosperity. "And David's heart smote him after he had numbered the people; and David said, . . . I have done very foolishly." There is no arithmetic of the spiritual life.

Or, still again, there may be a *selfish perversion of office*. Love of power, like love of money, is a root of all kinds of evils. Yet even the ecclesiastical leader is sometimes justly chargeable therewith. Is he free from avarice? It is well; but if he be tainted with arrogance or ambition—"by that sin fell the angels." If he yield to the love of place, it will blind his spirit to the Christian ideal—"How can ye believe who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" To cherish the passion for office is to kill the passion for souls. Yet it may be done even by one who, at the beginning of his career, was a true-hearted minister of Jesus Christ.

The exercise of authority, the obedience of subordinates, the deference of the people may be sweeter than honey to his taste. It may outvalue many thousands of money. Dreaming of these things through the years, he plans and labors and makes sacrifices for their attainment. If not directly, in numerous indirect ways instinctively recognized as efficacious, he seeks the good will of the governing powers and the suffrages of his brethren. It was the canny advice of the New Style Northern Farmer to his son:

"Doānt thou marry for munny, but goā wheer munny is."

Not daring to ask for votes, the office-seeker may make himself as genial as possible and go where the voters are.

For as he reckoneth with himself, so is he:
Eat and drink, saith he to thee;
But his heart is not with thee.

His hospitality spreads the table not for his guest but for himself.

Thus ecclesiastical headship, instead of being accepted in genuine humility as a sacred trust, has been sought and retained for its emoluments, its honor, or its power. As purely secular and selfish as the motive of any aspirant for that "gilded perturbation" that sits upon the head of a king, is the motive with which some chief pastorate in the Church of Jesus may be wished for and won.¹

6. NO CONFLICT BETWEEN SPIRITUAL INSIGHT AND ADMINISTRATION.

To conclude. The prophet as such cares for the idea, the spiritual and immutable truth. The administrator as such cares for the form, the organized institution. Are these two things, then, contrary the one to the other? So far from being contrary, they are coöperant; for the ultimate aims of both are the same. Yet such is the wide difference between them that he whose calling occupies him with either one of the two may be deficient in knowledge and appreciation of the other. He must have acquaintance with both. Like soul and body, though greatly differing, they are vitally related. The Christian pastor, whose ministry is to the soul, may fail through not giving due honor to the bodily organism. The physician, whose ministry is to the body, may fail through disregarding the soul. Similarly with truth and organization, principle and expediency, the gospel and government, prophet and administrator in the Church of Christ.

So, therefore, when the grace of spiritual insight and the gift of administrative skill are united in the same person, then the question of true ecclesiastical oversight is solved. We are told

¹Probably it would be difficult to find more true-hearted and diligent Christian workers, as a body, than the preachers of the British Wesleyan Conference. Yet it is this Conference which at a recent session (1907) in City Road Chapel, London, was asked to consider the resolution: "That the pastoral session of this Conference expresses its abhorrence of the persistent canvassing for honors and positions in the Methodist Church; it deplors that the custom has become so prevalent in Conferences and Synods, and calls on all the brethren to do their utmost to put down a system so open to abuse."

that Frederick the Great was accustomed to say that if he desired the ruin of a province he "would commit it to the government of a philosopher." A true enough saying, no doubt, if the brilliant and experienced monarch meant a mere closet philosopher. But it would be difficult to show that the philosophic mind is in itself other than a real qualification for the fine and difficult art of government. The ancient dream that in the Ideal Republic philosophers only would be made kings, or that in the mythical Golden Age of China it was actually so, was not all a dream. Let no other than a man who knows the things of the kingdom of heaven in his own heart be chosen for an administrative position whose object is to make that kingdom a reality among men.

Here, it need hardly be remarked, is no plea that "inefficient innocence" or wild-eyed fanaticism shall have the reins of government intrusted to its hands, but that truth-seeking, conscience, the insight of moral love, spiritual healthfulness shall be enthroned, as the Maker of man intended. Surely every "kingdom" that is named among men should be a kingdom of righteousness. Such is the will of the King of kings. And the Church of God, standing as it does for the very kingdom of heaven on earth—shall it not be a kingdom of righteousness, even of the righteousness which may be described most truly as holy love?

But as a qualification for the fine discernment and faithful application of this righteousness there is needed the spirit of the prophet. "Ambrose alone," said Theodosius the Great, "deserves the title of bishop." Why so? Because Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, in the spirit of a Nathan standing before the guilty King David, reprov'd the most powerful monarch of the age for an act of inhuman cruelty, thrust him back from the church door, and excluded him for the space of eight months from the fellowship of the congregation. "It is not easy," said the humbled emperor, "to find a man capable of teaching me the truth." But such an intrepid administrator of the truth had found him.

Let the spiritual mind illumine the masterful understanding.

Let the statesman be a seer. Let the pilot "know the stars as well as the sea." Let the builder of church organizations belong to the Pentecostal company who, in the light of the Spirit, see visions and dream dreams. Let the moral insight and the allied moral courage of the prophet nerve the hand of the administrator.

Who was the lawgiver of Israel, founder of the commonwealth, the first great statesman and leader, perhaps the biggest-brained man of the very ancient world? A prophet. "By a prophet," says Hosea, "Jehovah brought Israel up out of Egypt."¹ "There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face."

Who was it that had the administrative wisdom to lead the people into a closer unity and an unprecedented prosperity, and to see them safely through the perilous transition from the rule of the judges to the establishment of the kingdom? It was Samuel the seer. It was the prophet-judge, the man whose heart was no less attentive to the voice of Jehovah than his hand was steady to administer the law and do the truth. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." "Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only."

Likewise, when the stalwart son of Kish was to be crowned as Israel's first king, he was bidden by Samuel to go his way till he should meet a band of prophets coming down from a high place prophesying. "And the spirit of Jehovah will come mightily upon thee," said his inspired director, "and thou shalt prophesy with them and shalt be turned into another man." And as he went his way "God gave him another heart." Asked in surprise the people who had known him before, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"² It was even so; because he had been chosen to the office of king. Let it be shown in a surprising and memorable life-picture, at the very beginning of the monarchy, that back of the scepter of Israel's ruler was to beat the heart of a prophet. It was an indispensable qualification for the ideal king.

¹Hosea xii. 13.²1 Sam. x. 1-13.

Yet such were Saul's limitations, mental and moral, that no fullness or depth of the inward guiding light could abide with him; and here lay the secret of his painful failure on the throne. Then arose the real father of the Hebrew monarchy, "founder of the kingdom of promise," who with all his fearful faults—his sins and crimes—seems ever to have returned penitently as a learner to the feet of the All-Wise, and to say, "Jehovah will lighten my darkness." For in the person of a gifted shepherd lad on the hills of Bethlehem the aged Samuel had now found potentially both the sweet singer of Israel and the master-hand of her royal government. Psalmist and sovereign were one. Such was the sublime ideal: not a priest-king offering sacrifices, but a prophet-king discerning the will of God and ruling the elect people with Heaven-taught wisdom.

"Now these be the last words of David. . . .
 The Rock of Israel spake to me:
 One that ruleth over men righteously,
 That ruleth in the fear of God,
 He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
 A morning without clouds;
 When the tender grass springeth out of the earth,
 Through clear shining after rain."¹

But is not this very same truth the New Testament teaching concerning vision and government, prophecy and administration, in the churches of Christ? We have taken note of the distinction between the ministry of government and the prophetic ministry; we have now to note the fact that in the beginning of Christian organization these two ministries were united in one and the same person. The Apostles, whom Jesus sent forth first of all as prophets—"Behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes"²—were administrators. And when it became expedient for them to be relieved of certain administrative duties—such as the distribution of alms—the men to be chosen in their place must be "full of the Spirit" as well as of "wisdom."³

¹2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 3, 4.

²Acts iv. 34, 35; vi. 1-6.

³Matt. xxiii. 34. Cf. ch. x. 41.

Prophets appear as chief men, leaders, rulers (whether strictly *official* or not)—both speaking the word of God and bearing rule over the congregation.¹ Presbyters who, together with their presidency of the churches, labored “in the word and in teaching” were to be doubly honored.² It was Timothy, an evangelist, charged with “handling aright the word of truth,” to whom was committed as a vice-apostle the temporary superintendency of the church in Ephesus.³ It was prophets and teachers in Antioch who laid their hands upon two of their own number, to send them away on a special mission to the nations.⁴

And it is one of these same missionaries who unites henceforth the two functions most conspicuously in his own ministry: as a prophet, receiving visions and revelations from the Lord, and declaring the spirituality and inexorableness of the law, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the way of access to God, the unity of the Spirit, the unsearchable riches of Christ; as an administrator, planning and opening the way for the universal extension of organized Christianity, exercising discipline, ordaining elders, sending representatives to set things in order in places where he could not be personally present. At one time we find him writing to the church in Corinth: “I know a man in Christ, . . . how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words.”⁵ At another time he sends to the churches a plan for gathering money for the relief of the poor: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.”⁶

A mystic, was he? Truly a matchless mystic, if to call this man by such a name means that, through the divine life in his own spirit, he discerned intuitively the things of the Spirit of God. And he was all the more competent lifter of a collection

¹Acts xv. 22, 32; Heb. xiii. 7.

²1 Tim. v. 17.

³1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 15.

⁴Acts xiii. 1-3.

⁵2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

⁶1 Cor. xvi. 2, 3.

for the poor and director of the external affairs of the churches because of that spiritual discernment. For the heavenly things interpret the earthly and show the eternal relations of even the lowliest and most external duty. It is by the light of the resplendent sun, millions and millions of miles away, that men walk on their own little planet; and it is those who "walk in the light as God is in the light" that may expect to see clearly, so as to organize wisely, all service for Christ and his kingdom. Except in that light, how can they even know Christ and his kingdom, for whose sake the Church is to do whatever she does?

One can imagine an acceptable priest under the Old Covenant pursuing his round of daily duties without the inner teaching of the Spirit: one cannot imagine an office-bearer of an apostolic congregation fulfilling his office without such teaching.

Nor can it be asserted that the New Testament idea is practically lost and forgotten. Its witness has been wrought into the economy of all evangelical churches; for it is the minister of the gospel who is chosen as best fitted for the office of administration. The double qualification is sought, the grace of spiritual truth and the gift to create or maintain institutions. Prophet-rulers, *preachers-in-charge*, are appointed. Because not less manifest now than ever in Israel or ever in the first Christian century is the need of the heavenly vision to the man on whom shall rest the organizing and governmental care of the churches. "O Thou Eternal One, I must go up to the Mount ere I give laws to the people."

Is the double need of grace and gift sometimes fulfilled in power—as in the case of the strong "practical mystics," a Wesley, a Chalmers, a Fliedner, a Hudson Taylor, a Dwight L. Moody, a Hugh Price Hughes? Then may be heard the note of progress in the building of the Church. Then indeed will that kingdom of love and of law in which Jesus Christ bears the scepter show signs of its presence and its coming.

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